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# THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.

## A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ITS ORIGIN AND ITS WORK.

BY

SISTER MARY HELENA FINCK, M. A.
Of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word,
San Antonio, Texas.

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE CATHOLIC SISTERS COLLEGE OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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# THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD,

## SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.

1625-1924

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1925

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# PREFACE.

Religious orders and congregations have been established to supply the needs of society. In her ministry of charity the Church has always found devoted souls who, seeking sanctification in the service of weakness, have by their kind offices brought hope and comfort to the hearts of many. Fifty-nine years ago social conditions in Texas demanded the presence of an organization which would give compassionate service to suffering humanity. The Bishop of the diocese attempted to meet the need by bringing to the cities of Galveston and San Antonio the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. The scope of the present volume, while limiting its contents to the origin, growth, and development of the latter foundation, includes the circumstances which called the Community into existence, the motives which actuated the founders to undertake, as resources permitted, a systematic service to the helpless, and the ideals which guided and influenced its growth.

The study reveals little originality of principle or method in caring for the needy and suffering, but it abundantly testifies to the fact that lives may be made enduringly helpful by being interwoven with the lives of others in a religious congregation, the aim of which is to spread the Kingdom of God on earth. This history has been undertaken in the hope that the deeds and merits of the early Sisters who were pioneers in the social field of Texas may inspire others with a holy, self-sacrificing enthusiasm and encourage them to persevere even in the face of insurmountable difficulties.

The work is based on the most reliable sources: annals, records, and letters. In setting forth a brief sketch of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament the author has not attempted to deal with the mystic element in the life of Jeanne Chézard de Matel as this phase has been ably set forth by biog-

raphers of the foundress, the most reliable of whom are Canon Penaud and Mère St. Pierre. For assistance in collecting the material relative to the foundation in America she is indebted to the numerous members of her Congregation to all of whom she owes grateful acknowledgment, especially to Reverend Mother Mary John, Superioress General, to Mother Alphonse, and Mother Bonaventure, whose sympathy and cooperation have made this work possible.

She wishes to acknowledge in a very special manner her indebtedness to the Reverend Nicholas Aloysius Weber, S. M., S. T. D., Professor of History at the Catholic University of America, under whose general direction this work has been written. She expresses her gratitude also to the Reverend Patrick William Browne, S. T. D., Instructor in Church History at the Catholic University of America, for valuable suggestions given.

SISTER MARY HELENA.

Feast of the Annunciation,
March 25, 1925.

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# THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD OF SAN ANTONIO.

## CHAPTER I.

### Early History.

Jeanne de Matel.—The Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, Lyons, France.
1625—1866.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word was founded in 1866 in the city of Lyons, France. Desirous of securing a religious community, the members of which would devote their services to the sick and destitute of his diocese which at the time comprised the entire State of Texas, Bishop Dubuis of Galveston appealed to various congregations in the United States. His appeals elicited sympathy but the increased demands resulting as an aftermath of the Civil War rendered assistance impossible. Realizing the futility of his efforts in America the zealous missionary journeyed to Lyons, France, where, with the cooperation of Reverend Mother Angelique, a religious of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, he became the founder of a new institution.

Adversity was the portion of the pioneer Sisters but fortitude, faith, and charity having overcome all obstacles, the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word became a reality.

Established thus in the Monastery of Lyons, which dates its origin to the seventeenth century, the Community considered as its own the traditions of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament; hence, no history of the Texas foundation would be complete without a brief account of the life, and achievements of the foundress of that monastery, Jeanne Chézard de Matel.

Jeanne was born on the signorial domain of Matel, near Roanne,

in the Lyonnais, France, November 6, 1596. Her father was a descendant from the house of Chézards of Florence, Italy; having purchased the estate of Matel near Roanne he transferred his residence to France and devoted himself to the service of his new sovereign, Henry IV. Her mother, Jeanne Chaurier, a native of Roanne, was distinguished for her eminent qualities of heart and mind.[1]

The fifth of eight children, four of whom had died in childhood, Jeanne was bright and vivacious, a favorite everywhere. Her virtue and piety manifested in her tenderest years attracted the esteem of several ecclesiastics, not the least of whom was Father Peter Cotton, one of the foremost theologians of the seventeenth century. Desirous of entering Carmel, at the age of fifteen, she was advised by Father Jacquinot, her director and the Jesuit Provincial, to wait until God manifested to her His designs.

Of her education little is said; but if her biographers are silent on this point her writings are ample proof of the marvelous knowledge she had of Holy Scripture. Abbé Penaud whose Life of Mother de Matel was written in 1883 says, "they are a tissue of texts from the Old and New Testament. She does not receive a communication from her Divine Spouse, paint a picture of a situation or express a sentiment without quoting passages from our Holy Books to support or complete her thought."[2] A modern author infers from her writings that she was a subtle theologian, an ardent and rapturous mystic, dealing in metaphors and hyperbole, in intangible parallels, passionate questionings. She resembles St. Denis the Areopagite and St. Magdalena dei Pazzi: St. Denis in matter, St. Magdalena in manner.[3] Her knowledge of things spiritual and divine, her exquisite keenness in the elucidation of the mysteries of faith, and her uncommon penetration of

[1] Penaud, *La Révérende Mère Jeanne Chézard de Matel, Sa Vie*, vol. 1, p. 9, Paris, 1883.

[2] *Idem.*, p. 32.

[3] Huysmans, *The Cathedral* (Translated by Clara Bell), p. 94. New York, 1898.

the Scriptures prove that she was instructed in the school of Heaven.[4]

Complying with the advice given by Father Jacquinot, Jeanne spent the first twenty-three years of her life within the home circle, withdrawing herself by degrees from worldly affairs and giving her time to prayer and contemplation. Always sincerely devoted to the mysteries of the Passion and cherishing a particular love for the sacred Humanity of our Lord, she felt that her mission was to instil in the hearts of others that love which burned within her own. "She would found five monasteries in honor of the Five Wounds of Our Savior; the cloister would be strictly observed in each; the members of her religious families would devote their lives to the honor and glory of the Incarnate Word dwelling in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and to the education of young girls."[5]

Convinced of the sincerity of Jeanne's vocation Father Jacquinot in 1625 advised her to begin her work. Associating with herself two young ladies, Catherine Fleurine and Marie Figent, she rented a house in Roanne which had lately been vacated by the Ursulines. Two weeks after the installation she was joined by another companion, Madame Claude Bernard, who "willingly renounced the comforts she could have enjoyed among her own for a life in the new foundation."[6] Without doubt Madame de Matel was the patroness of the community during the first nine months of its existence, but her death on March 9, 1626, placed all responsibility on Jeanne. The loss of her mother whom she tenderly loved caused her untold grief, nevertheless, she was firm in her refusal to return home and assume the position as head of her father's household. In fact, so positive was she of God's Will in her regard that, with the advice of Father Jacquinot, she sought

[4] *Letter of Father Gibalin, S. J. quoted by Mother St. Pierre in her Vie de Révérende Mère J. de Matel*, p. 652. Fribourg, 1910.

[5] *Statuts et Constitutions d l'Orde du Verbe Incarné et du Saint-Sacrament.* Lyons, 1862.

[6] *Annales du Monastère de Lyons.*

ecclesiastical approbation of her plans. Archbishop Miron of Lyons to whom she applied, received her graciously, and impressed by the information obtained from the Fathers of the Jesuit College, permitted her to establish communities in Lyons and Roanne.

Acting on the suggestion of the Archbishop, Jeanne, or Mother de Matel as her companions now called her, transferred her community to a house on Mount Gourgillon in Lyons and Pope Urban VIII was asked to bestow upon the foundation his approbation. While awaiting this sanction the members of the community who as yet did not observe the cloister or wear a distinctive dress, practised with great exactitude the exercises common in well ordered religious houses.[7]

The sudden death of Archbishop Miron, in 1628, deprived Jeanne of a powerful auxiliary and the plague which raged in Lyons the same year claimed as victims two of her companions. Saddened but not discouraged, she departed for Paris where, with the approval of Urban VIII, she desired to establish the second of her monasteries. Since in addition to papal approbation, French ecclesiastical and secular permission had to be secured before a monastery could be considered canonically erected, Jeanne sought an interview for the purpose with the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur de Gondi. She was now to experience the result of that strong national spirit which had entered into church affairs. The Archbishop of Paris, ignoring the papal permission, saw no reason why the proposed Order should not unite with the Order of the Blessed Sacrament of Port Royal. While admitting a similarity of aims Jeanne insisted that the spirit of the institutions differed; consequently, the archbishop's proposition was not accepted. After four years of anxious waiting she departed for Lyons where she found the community successfully conducting a boarding school for young girls.

It will be remembered that Mother de Matel was still awaiting ecclesiastical approval of this foundation, the Bulls for which came

[7] *Idem.*

from Rome, August 14, 1634. Perhaps she felt that she could now reward the confidence and devotion of her companions by securing for them the privilege of becoming religious. But alas, if such were her hopes. Archbishop Alphonse de Richelieu, the successor of Monseigneur Miron, refused to sanction the work of his predecessor in office and Jeanne de Matel was helpless in the face of a second refusal.

Only the strongest faith could submit to such opposition, but the foundress of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, actuated by no worldly motive, patiently bided God's time. Summoning the members of the community which numbered thirty she placed before them the true state of affairs. "The Archbishop did not promise to make them religious; therefore, if they were doubtful and wished to enter other congregations she would offer no opposition."[8] This sincere avowal led to the withdrawal of ten; the rest protested their entire confidence in her whom they recognized as their superioress. "An intense ardor for the exercises of the religious life inflamed each member of the community, the Rule as planned by Mother de Matel with the help of the Jesuits of Roanne was faithfully observed, and the opposition of the Archbishop did not prevent a steady increase in the ranks. In 1635 three nieces of Father Gibalin, S. J., were received, all of whom figured prominently in the subsequent history of the order."[9]

With undaunted courage Jeanne and her companions waited fourteen years for the fulfillment of their project; towards the close of the year 1639 the foundress was, through the influence of Father Guesney, a Jesuit of Avignon, welcomed to that city by the diocesan authorities; the city councillors consented to the foundation, and five years later Innocent X confirmed the approval.[10] It is not difficult to imagine the joy produced by these

[8] *Annales du Monastère de Lyons.*

[9] *Idem.*

[10] Mère St. Pierre, *Vie de la Révérende Mère Jeanne Chézard de Matel*, p. 223. Fribourg, 1910.

events. Mother de Matel secured a house in Avignon and set aside the octave of the feast of the Immaculate Conception as the date for the establishment of the Order. On that occasion Bishop Cohon of Nimes celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the hastily arranged chapel and gave the habit to the novices.

To organize this, her first canonically erected monastery, Mother de Matel called to Avignon five members of the Lyons community. Although desirous of becoming a religious herself, she was obliged to subordinate her wishes to her mission which was to found five houses. The two which were awaiting approbation had to be supported from her own inheritance; the founding of two more would necessitate travel and communication with the world; and the pronouncement of her vows at the expiration of the novitiate would deprive her of the right of administering the financial affairs of these institutions. Objections such as these having been seriously considered by those capable of judging, all had counselled delay.

The habit which Mother de Matel designed for her community consisted of a white tunic, a red cincture, and a large red scapular. On the last was embroidered in blue in honor of our Blessed Mother, a crown of thorns; the crown encircled the monogram of the Holy Name of Jesus, I. H. S.; under this monogram a heart was placed, surmounted by three nails and bearing the motto: "Amor Meus." The tunic of white serge was to remind the religious of the purity and innocence of their Spouse; the red cincture, a symbol of the love which was to unite them to Him, recalled the cords which bound Our Savior to the pillar; and the scapular signified His bloody cross. The guimp and bandeau were white and a black veil completed the religious costume; at the profession of vows the Sisters were to receive a red mantle.[11]

The year of probation passed quickly and the five novices pronounced their solemn vows. In truth, Jeanne de Matel could now be called the foundress of a new Order. Her zeal for God's glory and honor became known and in 1643 the Bishop of Grenoble

[11] MÈRE ST. PIERRE, *op. cit.* p. 259.

welcomed her to his diocese where she began the foundation of another monastery. The same year Monsieur Seguier, the Chancellor of France, a personal friend of Mother de Matel's, secured from the young King, Louis XIV, letters patent authorizing her to erect a monastery in Paris. A house in the Faubourg St. Germain was purchased, and having been converted into a convent the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated there for the first time, November 1, 1643; one month later Dom Brachet, Prior of the Abbey, declared the cloister obligatory. In a comparatively short time the monastery prospered, the community increased, and the school was well attended. Unfortunately, a combination of political and personal complications prevented Mother de Matel from having the letters patent registered by Parliament, a failure which eventually led to the confiscation of the property. Incorporated in the General Hospital of the Pietà in 1672 the monastery was later ceded to Madame de Fourville, Abbess of the Bernadines of our Lady of Pentamont.

While thus engaged in the interests of her foundations Mother de Matel did not fail to give her attention to the social needs of Paris. The outbreak of the first, or "parliamentary" Fronde in 1648 spread desolation and misery over the entire territory. Not satisfied with distributing abundant alms Jeanne daily visited the houses of the poor and ascertained the immediate wants of the unfortunates. With the return of peace she was informed of the death of Alphonse de Richelieu, who was succeeded by Archbishop Camille de Neuville. The Primate visited the Monastery of Lyons on October 20, 1655, and gave episcopal authorization to the foundation. The first to receive the habit in the newly erected institution was Catherine Fleurine, Mother de Matel's faithful companion and assistant.

Although the declining years of Jeanne had been saddened by injustice and misunderstandings she never lost her characteristic earnestness, humility, and meekness. With an inflexible courage and constancy she placed her confidence in God and expected success from none but Him. Having completed the establishment of four

houses, she planned to found her fifth and last one at Roanne, the home of her childhood, but to her great disappointment, age, ill-health, and the embarrassments then involving the Paris community, forced her to abandon her project. Realizing that her end was approaching she asked for the habit of her Order and was invested on September 10, 1670; the same day she pronounced her vows and a few hours later Jeanne de Matel, or Sister Mary of Jesus as she was known in religion, breathed her last.

Some, enamored of the supernatural have seen in Jeanne the contemplative; others, justly appreciating what the gift of suffering means to a soul, have praised her as the victim of persecution; few have emphasized her rôle as a foundress. The four houses established during her lifetime could not compare with the forty founded by Madame Legras, and the eighty by St. Frances de Chantal, "yet," wrote Father Semple, "those houses and their work were great in themselves."[12] "To them we are indebted for generations of valiant women, who in all situations have been an honor to the Catholic Church and to the diocese of Lyons."[13] The mystic number "five" was completed by the community of Lyons when it opened a convent in Anduze; and a cloister in Roquemaure took the place of the suppressed monastery in Paris. The communities of these institutions continued their work of teaching until February, 1790, when the foundations of Avignon, Grenoble, Anduze, and Roquemaure were lost to history.

Provisionally, the government, after issuing the decree for the suppression of religious orders in France, permitted the communities devoted to teaching and caring for the sick to remain in the houses they occupied. The nuns of the Incarnate Word of Lyons, refusing to take the oath to the Civil Constitution, were dragged before the tribunal, but no amount of intimidation could shake their resolve. Finding them determined in their opposition, the

[12] SEMPEL, H. C., S. J., *Life of Mother de Matel*, in manuscript. Archives at the Motherhouse.

[13] *Letter written by Cardinal P. Coullié*, prefacing the biography of Mother de Matel by Mère St. Pierre, p. xix.

authorities sent them back to the monastery, which in their absence had been pillaged, and there they remained until definitely expelled, September 29, 1792. The Sisters succeeded in rescuing a safe containing numerous documents, a portrait of Mother de Matel, another of Catherine Fleurine and many writings of the foundress.

In the midst of the dangers of the Revolutionary days the religious united in groups and attempted to enjoy some of the practices of the spiritual life. From the Annals it is learned that Mother Benoit acted as Superioress of a band of eleven who gathered at La Croix Rousse, Plagnalle House, Carlos Street; a group of nine resided in the heart of the city; some retired to St. Just; the rest, excepting Sister Marie Anne who went into exile, found safety in their own homes. It is with this religious that the subsequent history is concerned, for she was destined by God to cooperate in the re-establishment of the Order in France.

## Restoration.

Unwilling to forego the privilege of practising her religion, Sister Marie Anne secured a passport and traveled through Switzerland to Ravenna. The Archbishop to whom she had letters of recommendation received her kindly and permitted her to retire to the Benedictine Abbey of St. André. There she met Abbé Denis who, with three of his fellow priests, had been obliged to leave Azerables in 1793. Full of enthusiasm for her Order, Sister Marie Anne frequently conversed with him on the subject, however, there is no evidence that plans relative to their return were formulated.

In 1801 the French Revolution had spent its force, and religious worship was restored. Abbé Denis and Sister Marie Anne returned to their native land; the former to his parish in Azerables, the latter to her family in Lyons. The extraordinary fervor of the saintly priest attracted the attention of the parishioners and drew around him many who were anxiously awaiting the restoration of religious

practices. Among these were three young girls, the Misses Mollet from Lauriere, Jouannin and Gayaud from the Canton of Dun in the Creuse. During the worst days of the Revolution they had, in the restricted circles of their influence, contributed to the preservation of the faith in the people around them, often providing asylum for outlawed priests. Desirous of leading a life detached from the world they placed themselves under the guidance of Abbé Denis, and in 1806 began the practices of the common life.

Assisted by two theolgians of St. Sulpice, Abbé Denis drew up Rules for the community, which was to devote its services to the sick. With the approval of the Archbishop, Monseigneur Dubourg, the novices were permitted to pronounce their vows, July 5, 1807.[14] A short time later the Abbé opened a free school under the care of Sister Teresa Mollet; Sister Madeleine Gayaud was commissioned to visit the sick; Sister Clare Jouannin gave catechetical instructions to the children of the parish. In addition to these duties the Sisters practised the greatest austerities, obligating themselves to perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in order to atone for the sins committed during the Revolution. Because their house soon became too small the courageous band undertook the construction of another, aided thereto by the generous workmen of the village.

For nine years the community, encouraged by the ecclesiastical and secular authorities of Azerables, continued its work of mercy but without canonical approval. By a happy disposition of Providence Abbé Denis again met Sister Marie Anne and requested her to identify herself with the undertaking. Arriving in Azerables October 28, 1816, she was received by the community who at once assigned to her the office of Mistress of Novices. Acting on the advice of the Abbé, she had brought with her the habit, Rules and Constitutions of her Order, and shortly after her installation was empowered to make any changes necessary to conform the existing community with those founded by Jeanne de Matel. On February 2, all the Sisters, who until then had worn a black habit with a red

[14] PENAUD, op. cit., vol. II, p. 417.

cincture, adopted the costume of the Order of the Incarnate Word. A short time later the Superioress laid down her office, and Sister Marie Anne was elected; she continued to govern the community until her death, September 8, 1819.

The news of Sister Marie Anne's entrance into the newly founded community spread rapidly and her example was followed by Sister Marie Victoria-Angelique of Avignon and Sister St. Paul Deschamp of Lyons. Thus three witnesses of the canonical erection of the Order of the Incarnate Word were furnished and these had the happiness of seeing the restored houses blessed with remarkable growth.

Gratifying as was this evidence of success, hope for the re-establishment of the Monastery of Lyons in the neighborhood of our Lady of Fourvières was never relinquished. One attempt after another proved futile until there appeared a zealous ecclesiastic of Lyons, M. Galtier, who devoted his time, fortune, and talents to the work of restoration. By a happy inspiration he selected from among his spiritual daughters Mademoiselle Rosalie Hiver whom he deemed qualified for the enterprise and sent her to Azerables. There she received the habit and with it the name Sister Marie Angelique. Returning to Lyons, she cooperated in the restoration of the monastery and had the satisfaction of seeing it the center and guide of the other convents of the Order.

To follow the history of the various houses which came into existence as a result of Abbé Denis' endeavors would be interesting but would lead beyond the scope of this work; fifteen convents were opened in France, the Sisters of which observed the cloister and devoted their time to the education of children. In the Convent of Azerables which combined the care of the sick with the work of teaching, Mother Angelique received her religious training and her knowledge relative to the duties of a teacher and a nurse. This experience proved a valuable asset when, in 1866, at the invitation of Bishop Dubuis of Galveston, she cooperated in the establishment of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

## CHAPTER II.

### Early History Continued.

### Texas.—The Franciscan Missionaries.—The Congregation of the Missions.

The history of the Catholic Church in Texas dates back to the sixteenth century, to the era of Spanish glory. Identified with this period are the familiar names of Cabaza de Vaca, Coronado, and De Soto, but apart from the fact that their explorations justified Spain's claim to the territory, no permanent results accrued.[1] For a century and a half Spanish explorers proceeded step by step from the borders to the interior and slowly formed ideas concerning its geography and its suitability for settlement.[2] With the explorer went the missionary, who, during the long and perilous journeys east of the Rio Grande, baptized Indians, offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and planted crosses in token of Christian and Spanish ownership.[3]

The Viceroy of Mexico, Spain's representative in the New World, who had jurisdiction over the territory was responsible for the religious and civil welfare of the inhabitants. The missionaries frequently reminded him of his duty towards the Indians of Texas, but Spanish officials worked slowly and no definite steps were taken until the latter part of the seventeenth century. Then reports of French encroachment on the coast hastened the Viceroy to the decision of making a settlement on the eastern frontier.

Subsequent events proved that the reports concerning the French were not groundless, for in 1682, La Salle, following in the wake of Father Marquette, had sailed down the Mississisppi, claimed the land on both sides of the river for France, and called it Louisiana.

[1] Bancroft, *North American States*, vol. 1, p. 381, San Francisco, 1883.
[2] Bolton, *Spanish Occupation of Texas*, 1519-1690, Austin, 1912.
[3] Bolton, *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest*, p. 291, New York, 1916.

Three years later, on his return from Europe, while seeking to effect a landing at the same place he missed his way and entered Matagorda Bay. Sailing up the Lavaca River, La Salle selected a suitable location on which he built Fort St. Louis, and in a room of the Fort which served the purpose of a chapel the missionaries said Mass and administered the Sacraments. There were three Franciscans and three Sulpicians among this group of French explorers on Texas soil,[4] but their labors in the field were of short duration; disease, disputes, and the fierce Karankawa Indians soon put an end to Fort St. Louis; La Salle was killed, and Spain was left in undisputed control of Texas.[5]

Unaware of the fate of the French fort and its inhabitants, the Viceroy of Mexico sent an expedition under Alonso de Leon to expel the intruders. Finding nothing but the ruins of La Salle's attempt at occupation, the Spaniards continued their march to the land of the Tejos, an Indian confederacy in east Texas. On the 29th day of March, 1690, Mass was offered in the humble little chapel which had been hastily constructed, and the first procession of the Blessed Sacrament was held within the borders of Texas.[6] In honor of their founder the friars called this first mission in the new land San Francisco de los Tejos. The exact spot whereon the mission stood is not known but it must have been between the Trinity and the Neches Rivers, about forty-five miles in a southwesterly direction from present day Nacogdoches.[7]

After erecting a chapel and a dwelling for the priests, Father Fontcubierto with two assistants and three soldiers took charge of the mission and the remainder of the expedition returned to Mexico. The process of organization had scarcely begun when smallpox broke out among the Indians, and the Superior of the

[4] ENGELHARDT, *Missions and Missionaries in California*, vol. III, p. 15, California, 1908.

[5] BANCROFT, op. cit., vol. I, p. 395.

[6] *Letter of Father Damian Massanet*, translated by BOLTON in *Spanish Exploration of the Southwest*, p. 379, New York, 1916.

[7] GARRISON, *Texas*, p. 30, New York, 1902.

Franciscans contracted the disease and died, February 6, 1691.[8] The responsibility of the enterprise now fell to Father Hidalgo, who with his companion was unremitting in his care of the bodily and spiritual needs of his flock.

The dominant motive of Spanish policy was the conversion of the natives but as Bolton writes: "the missions were an agent of the State as well. Spain expected the missionaries to assist in extending, holding, Christianizing, and civilizing the frontiers."[9] Her government bore the initial expenses but every settlement was expected to become self-supporting as soon as possible. The secular clergy were then to replace the friars.

To fulfill the end for which every mission was founded it was necessary to have sufficient funds, efficient military protection and unity with Mexico. Unfortunately, San Francisco de los Tejos did not possess these essentials. Mexico neglected to establish safe communications with east Texas, the supplies which were brought from Saltillo or other Mexican State often fell into the hands of hostile tribes, and frequently the weak but turbulent garrisons hindered rather than aided the missionaries.

In addition to these difficulties Father Hidalgo and his companion had to face floods, pestilence, and the severe cold of winter; though they worked zealously, their efforts met with scant success: "The Indians refused to live in communities, the soldiers became unmanageable. Finally the Viceroy ordered the abandonment of the mission, and in October, 1693, the Friars and soldiers buried what property they could not carry with them and departed."[10]

While years of political strife in Europe brought Spanish occupation in Texas to a comparative standstill, similar events did not prevent France from establishing colonies in Old Biloxi and in New Orleans, east of the Mississippi River. Spain, in her endeavor to

[8] Shea, J. G., *The Catholic Church in Colonial Days*, p. 480, New York, 1886.

[9] Bolton, *Texas in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 10, California, 1915.

[10] Garrison, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

thwart every effort at commercial intercourse, insisted on maintaining a conservative attitude, but despite her attempts, illicit trade was carried on between the Texan Indians and the French. In 1714 the Viceroy was startled by a report of Louis Juchereau St. Denis' trading expedition to the Rio Grande. Immediately plans were made for the establishment of four missions in east Texas, the settlers destined for the enterprise departing from Mexico, April 27, 1716.[11]

In the party were four Franciscans from the College of Queretaro and five from the Zacatecan College, the most illustrious of whom was Father Anthony Margil, the Apostle of the Indians. For years he had labored among the natives of South America and Mexico, converting thousands and leading the people he found living in a state of savagery into a new world of light and peace. During the next five years he labored among the Tejos, building Mission Dolores among the Aes, Our Lady of Guadalupe among the Nacogdoches, San Miguel among the Adaes, and San José among the Noaches. Hearing that the French had no priest with them at Natchitoches, he walked fifty miles to preach to them, hear their confessions and thus enabled them to receive the Sacraments. With the restoration of Mission San Francisco and the erection of La Concepcion, the centers from which religious influence radiated in the east numbered six. In each the missionaries worked diligently, preaching and baptizing, and teaching the simple arts. With charity and gentleness the friars instructed the Indians in the use of the Spanish language, taught them to pray and work, attended to their wants, corporal and spiritual. But success did not attend their efforts. The Indian was hard to manage, inconstant, unfaithful, and dissatisfied, and it took years to teach him a thorough understanding of his new life.

Some of the Spaniards distrusted the system of colonizing by means of presidios and missions and did not long delay very positive and outspoken objections to it. In 1727-8 General Pedro Rivera made a tour of inspection, ordering the suppression of the

[11] *Idem.*, p. 50.

presidio of Dolores and the reduction of the garrisons of three other missions. The friars protested vehemently, for after all, many dying children and adults had been sent to Heaven through baptism, though nothing could be done with the able-bodied Indians. Their protests failed to obtain a restoration of the presidios, and the friars, powerless in the face of Spanish domination over ecclesiastical affairs, were forced to withdraw.[12] Mission San Francisco, La Concepcion and San José were then transferred to the vicinity of the lately established presidio of San Antonio de Bejar.[13]

Shortly before this transfer was effected the Spanish officials had seen the advisability of making a central settlement between the missions in the east and Mexico; accordingly, San Antonio de Bejar had been founded, and Friar Olivares established the mission San Antonio de Valero in the neighborhood of the presidio.[14] Within a few years the latter was reinforced by the mission San José, and the three eastern missions, henceforth known as San Francisco de la Espada, La Purisima Concepcion, and San Juan Capistrano. The year 1731 records the establishment of the civil settlement known as the Villa of San Fernando.

Thus was founded one of the most interesting cities of Texas, if not indeed of the whole Southwest. The ruins of those five missions are standing to-day, silently but eloquently perpetuating the memory of the sacrifices and devotion of those early Franciscans. What they were originally can only be conjectured, for the ravages of time and vandalism have done much to reduce them to their present state of decay; enough remains, however, to convince the spectator that they were reared by a band of workers who had but one object in view—the glory of God and the salvation of souls. No work was too great for the House destined as a dwelling place for the Most High. Corner wrote when describing the baptistry window of San José: "Good judges consider it (the

[12] Cf. Ryan, *Dioccsan Organization in the Spanish Colonies, Catholic Historical Review*, vol. III, p. 146-156.

[13] Garrison, *op. cit.*, p. 50. [14] *Idem.*, p. 70.

window) the finest gem of architectural ornamentation existing in America today. Its curves and proportions are a perpetual delight to the eye . . . it is art which does not satiate, but ever reveals some fresh beauty in line or curve."[15] The progress made in these San Antonio missions was considerable. "Previous to 1745 all had good irrigation ditches, productive farms and ranches, and shops for weaving and spinning. At Mission San Antonio de Valero alone no less than forty bands of tribes were represented by the baptisms between 1731 and 1745."[16]

In striking contrast to these centers of thrift and energy was the apathetic Villa San Fernando. The settlers, brought by Spain from the Canary Islands, relied on the government for their existence; they were shiftless and quarrelsome, and frequent disputes arose between their officials and the mission authorities.

From east Texas and the San Antonio River the Franciscans traveled to other sites, founding missions in various localities in the west and along the coast; with the exception of La Bahia all perished eventually. Although the contributory causes of failure depended to a great extent on local conditions, it is not presuming too much to say that the lack of efficient military protection played the dominant rôle in the work of destruction. Efficient garrisons meant increased expenditures, and Spain had long been complaining that the results of the missions were incommensurate with the cost. Efforts were made by the government to consolidate all the foundations at Bejar; but nothing definite was accomplished until 1794 when an order was issued for their secularization.[17] The Franciscans then gradually withdrew.

This mandate had been made possible by the rapid events of the latter part of the eighteenth century. Spain no longer feared French aggression, because by the Treaty of Paris, 1763, England had become possessor of all land east of the Missisippi River. A

[15] Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar*, p. 17, San Antonio, 1890.

[16] Bolton and Marshall, *The Colonization of North America*, p. 299, New York, 1920.

[17] Bancroft, op. cit., vol. I, p. 635.

later Treaty, that of 1783, brought Spain and the United States into direct contact, and for a while serious boundary disputes threatened. Although this trouble was averted by the Neutral Ground arrangement, Spain was not blind to the fact that Americans were drifting into Texas. With the Americans came republican ideas of government which spread so rapidly that before the ninteenth century was far advanced Spain lost Mexico, South America, and Texas.

The Church did not escape her share of persecution during those years of revolt. Texas was under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Linares, but there had been no episcopal visitation since 1759.[18] The new government which replaced the Spanish régime was to a great extent controlled by Masonic lodges, and a veritable war on churches was inaugurated. The missions had been secularized, the Indians were now scattered, and all available church property was confiscated. Texas and Coahuila were united under the one administration which prohibited all religious endowments for education and charity, reduced the tithes of the clergy, deprived them of all civil authority, and finally prohibited the bishops from issuing pastorals or edicts. Against these unjust measures the few remaining bishops and administrators of the dioceses of Mexico protested, but in vain.[19]

With the establishment of self-government Mexico opened her provinces to foreigners, and hundreds of home-seekers from the United States were led to Texas by Empresarios or Contractors. Chief among these latter was Stephen Fuller Austin who, in 1821, conducted a number of families to the banks of the Brazos. Later, other Americans followed, and, welcomed by the newly established Mexican Republic, they found homes on the Brazos, the Trinity, and elsewhere. These pioneers, representing all classes and creeds, brought with them their institutions and culture; free speech,

[18] CORRIGAN, "Episcopal Succession in the United States," *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 11, p. 133, Washington, 1916.

[19] SHEA, *The Catholic Church in the United States*, vol. III, p. 711, New York, 1890.

popular elections, and practical self-government became the rule in the colonies. No one with any knowledge of political science could fail to see that the germs of revolution existed from the beginning. Mexico, realizing the situation after it was too late, made efforts to stay the ever-shifting western frontier line of the United States; but Texas lay in the path of the onward march; if Mexico could not check the flood she must be eventually engulfed. Again, Texas faced the Mississipi rather than the Rio Grande, all trade was carried on with the States, frequent visits were made to relatives along the Atlantic coast and those who could afford it received their education from colleges in New England. There was therefore little understanding and still less sympathy between the colonists and Mexico. Slight troubles were easily magnified, coercive laws were passed, and the breach between the nationalities was widened.

Had Texas been granted a Constitution distinct from that of Coahuila, and subject to Mexico alone, the revolt might have been deferred; but Santa Anna, President of the Republic, proceeded to transfer the federal government into a highly centralized organization; refusing to consider the separation of the two provinces, he undertook to carry out restrictive measures which tended to curtail the development of Texas. The means by which the laws were carried out, rather than the laws themselves, enflamed the settlers and resulted in the Revolution of 1835.

Though brief, the struggle was decisive, and Texas emerged a Republic recognized by the United States, Belgium, Great Britain, and France. Little time was lost in organizing her federal forces and local governments, in providing for the increase of her navy and army, and serious attention was given to the foundation of a school system. Consistent with the principles enunciated by the Constitution of the United States, which was the basis of the Texas code, religious freedom was granted.

The young Republic excited interest among the World Powers, for politically and commercially it was destined to play an important rôle. No less keen was the interest manifested in its reli-

gious welfare by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide. Archbishop Blanc of New Orleans was requested to send to the Republic some responsible person who would report to the Sacred Congregation the results of a conscientious investigation of religious conditions. Accordingly, Father Timon, later Bishop of Buffalo, and Father Liberia, both members of the Congregation of the Mission, visited Texas: "The population numbers two hundred thousand," wrote Father Timon to his Superior. "In this vast extended State there are two priests and their conduct, unfortunately, is not irreproachable; they live in San Antonio, a city of fifteen hundred Catholic Mexicans, fifty Catholic Americans, and about one hundred Protestants. This city has a beautiful church which could not be built today for 750,000 francs, but it has been damaged by fire. . . . The faith, however, is still alive." [20]

Continuing his travels, Father Timon and his companion found in Goliad about fifteen or twenty families, in Refugio forty Irish Catholic families; in San Patricio on the Neuces "not an inhabitant." Victoria's population consisted of about two hundred Irish families and thirty or forty Protestants, "east of Victoria as far as the Colorado River, and to the south along the Gulf of Mexico, there are Catholics but few in number." [21]

In the east conditions were not so deplorable. "Houston is the Capital of the Republic. About two years ago there was not a trace of a house where the city now stands, today there are five thousand people of whom three hundred are Catholic." [22]

"I had no letter of introduction to anyone," the report continues, "and everybody to whom I applied seemed to be afraid of priests and ashamed to acknowledge they were Catholics. . . . On the feast of St. John the Evangelist we said Mass in the place where without doubt the Holy Sacrifice was offered for the first time in Houston." [23]

[20] *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, vol. XII, p. 91, Lyons, 1840.
[21] *Idem.*
[22] *Idem.*
[23] *Idem.*

"So you see, my dear Superior, the needs are extreme. The priests who come to Texas ought to be closely observed and carefully selected. Their conduct ought to be edifying in order to repair scandals and gain public confidence. . . . In two or three years the church in Texas can pay for itself, but at this moment it is important to organize, and we cannot do so without heavy expenses. Everything is very dear, immigration is so heavy that all the necessities are high priced. It will not be so in two years." [24]

Detailed as was this report it failed to mention that Father Timon had gone from door to door seeking the strayed sheep, that he preached several times a day, that the people of Houston had placed the Capitol at his disposal, and that senators and representatives had crowded the building to hear his sermons. Father Liberia supplies the omissions, adding: "It was a vast and beautiful field that here presented itself for the children of St. Vincent." [25]

As a result of the account submitted to the Sacred Congregation, the Cardinal Prefect confided Texas to the care of the Mission Fathers; in the spring of 1840 Father Timon was appointed Prefect Apostolic with Father John Marie Odin, Vice-Prefect Apostolic.[26]

The history of the revival of religion in Texas is the history of these two energetic missionaries who were untiring in their endeavors to bring priests to the Republic, to open schools, to build churches, and to spread the saving truths of religion. Two months after his appointment Father Odin arrived in San Antonio, where he found that his Superior had given a just estimate of conditions. During the preceding fourteen years no one had presented himself at the tribunal of penance; still, as Father Timon wrote, the faith was there and only needed encouragement. Father Odin lost no time seeking the neglected souls. He began by teaching the catechism to the children; he visited the sick and administered to the dying; tears of joy came to the eyes of the aged when they saw the Blessed Sacrament carried in procession.

[24] *Idem.* [25] *Idem.*, p. 39. [26] *Idem.*

After three months of ceaseless work in the city the missionary set out for the scattered settlements along the San Antonio River, including in his visitation Seguin, Gonzales, and Victoria. On the Lavaca he found a colony of seventy people who had formerly belonged to his congregation at the Barrens, Missouri, and who were now being cared for by two young priests from Kentucky, Father Hayden and Father Clarke. Austin, the new Capital, was Father Odin's next stop; with the aid of Monsieur de Saligny, chargé-d'affaires of His Majesty, the King of France, the Catholic Church was confirmed in the possession of San Fernando's Church, the Alamo, La Concepcion, San José, San Francisco, and the churches of Victoria, Goliad and Refugio with their lots, not exceeding fifteen acres.[27]

The great need everywhere was churches. The people were eager to hear sermons, anxious for priests, yet were unable to contribute to their support. It was a sore trial for the zealous missionaries to content themselves with merely visiting the various communities from time to time. They saw the absolute need of priests, and at the same time the reluctance with which the people of Texas parted with the few crusts of bread for the support of the two or three among them. Yet no one could be severe with those unfortunte settlers for the crops had failed, sickness was prevalent, and money was scarce. In the face of such difficulties a less intrepid worker would have faltered, but Father Odin was a man of action, resolute and courageous. Patiently he toiled on, erecting buildings at his own expense and trusting to Providence for the future. Previous to 1841 he had repaired the churches in San Antonio and Victoria, built two new chapels on the banks of the San Antonio River, and four at Galveston.

The devotion and zeal of the missionary having attracted the attention of Rome, he was, in 1841, appointed Bishop of Claudiopolis and Coadjutor Bishop of Detroit. Diffident of self and loath to accept honors and preferments, he returned the Bulls; but, Pope Gregory XVI, ignoring the refusal, appointed him Vicar-Apostolic

[27] Shea, *History of Catholic Church in United States*, vol. III, p. 718.

of Texas under the title of Bishop of Claudiopolis.[28] The consecration took place on March 6, 1842; Archbishop Blanc assisted by Bishop Portier and Bishop Chance performing the ceremonies.

The prospect before the newly consecrated Bishop was not promising; an immense field, a few scattered churches, a mere handful of laborers, and in addition to these difficulties, serious political disturbances agitating the young Republic. Mexico had never recognized the peace negotiations made by Santa Anna at the close of the War of 1835, and seven years later the struggle was renewed. It was a serious moment for Texas which despite the best intentions, had established no enviable reputation for self-government. Her debt had increased from two million dollars in 1838 to seven and a half millions in 1841; she had been victimized by land speculators who deprived her of a large source of revenue; her army, composed of volunteers from the United States, was troublesome; and her commerce was insignificant. Texas wanted annexation to the United States but fear of Mexico prevented the request from being granted.[29] However, the election of President Houston inaugurated a policy of peace and conditions improved. Immigration increased, many Catholics found homes in the Republic, and the demand for priests was imperative. Bishop Odin had three to assist him in this colossal work. Alone in Galveston, he ministered to the Catholics of Houston and the districts along the Trinity and the Brazos Rivers.

After four years of ceaseless labor, finding it impossible to meet the requirements of his people with the resources at hand, the Bishop departed for France, confident that there he would find priests who would willingly assist him in his mission field. The earnestness and sincerity of the missionary awakened a response in the hearts of the young seminarians whom he addressed in Lyons and elsewhere. With characteristic frankness he pictured the dangers and miseries, the adventures and sufferings they would

[28] CLARKE, *Lives of the Deceased Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States*, vol. II, p. 214, New York, 1888.

[29] GARRISON, *op. cit.*, Chapter XIX, p. 228-240.

have to endure, nevertheless, eight young men volunteered for foreign missionary service, among whom was Abbé Dubuis.

Returning to Texas which in his absence had been admitted to the Union, Bishop Odin occupied himself with the lately arrived missionaries. Those who had not completed their studies had continued their journey to the Barrens or to St. Louis, the rest he assigned to posts on the San Antonio, the Brazos, and the Rio Grande. In 1847 all Texas was erected into the diocese of Galveston with Bishop Odin as its first Ordinary.[30]

Having increased the number of priests, the Bishop turned his attention to the schools and at his invitation the Ursuline Nuns opened academies in Galveston and San Antonio. The Oblate Fathers accepted the mission of Brownsville and the College in Galveston, and the Brothers of Mary opened St. Mary's College in San Antonio. Another voyage to France in quest of missionaries secured a community of cloistered Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament for the Brownsville school; under the able direction of Reverend Mother St. Claire who founded this, the first house of the Incarnate Word in America, the community prospered and within a short time was able to respond to the Bishop's request for establishments in other sections of the State.

Each year added to the list of conversions, and served to establish the faith on a firmer basis. The number of priests increased, schools and convents prospered. In 1860 Archbishop Blanc was called to his reward, and Rome summoned the Bishop of Galveston to the vacant See. Although the Southwest regretted the loss of Archbishop Blanc, it found in his successor one who honored the ministry by his virtues, his ability, and his evangelical spirit. Towards the end of the same year Archbishop Odin paid his *ad limina* visit to Rome, and on his return to France brought to Abbé Dubuis the Bulls appointing him Bishop of Galveston.[31]

[30] *History of the Galveston Diocese*, compiled by the Priests of the Seminary, p. 102, Galveston, 1922.

[31] Abbé, J. P., *Vie de Monseigneur Dubuis*, p. 142, Roanne, 1900.

## CHAPTER III.

### Bishop Claude Marie Dubuis,

Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

Closely connected with the name of Archbishop Odin, and sharing with it the esteem and veneration of the pioneers of Texas, is that of Claude Marie Dubuis, the second Bishop of Galveston and the founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. Like his predecessors in office Bishop Dubuis, who was a native of France, devoted the greater part of his life to the upbuilding of Catholicism in Texas. So earnestly did he fulfill his mission and so lasting have been the results of his achievements, that the Church of his adopted country has not hesitated to call him the "Apostle of Texas."

Claude Marie Dubuis was born March 8, 1817, in the parish of Coutouvre, in the Department of the Loire, France. His father, François Dubuis, was a hard working farmer, whose frank and open character won for him the esteem and affection of the village. Madame Dubuis, his mother, a woman of rare energy, possessed the virtues and qualifications that distinguish true Christian womanhood, and her one desire was to bring up her eight children in the fear and love of God.[1]

Naturally bright and vivacious, Claude was eager to study, but France of the early nineteenth century afforded few educational advantages. The National Convention of 1792-1795, after dissolving the existing educational system, failed to carry out its measures of reform; and "Napoleon I did not attempt to organize elementary education."[2] From traveling instructors who visited the rural sections for a few months every winter Claude learned

[1] Abbé, J. P., *Vie de Monseigneur Dubuis*, p. 2, Roanne, 1900.
[2] McCormick, *History of Education*, p. 372, Washington, 1915.

to read and write; his own mother taught him the truths of his religion. When ten years of age he was permitted to receive his first Holy Communion, after which happy event he went to reside with his godfather, Abbé Dubost, who, believing that the child was the object of special graces and was destined for the priesthood, resolved to supervise his education. The many duties of the Abbé who was the curé of St. Marcel l'Eclaire afforded him no leisure, consequently, Claude made little progress in his studies; at the end of five years he was sent to l'Argentière, a secondary ecclesiastical seminary.

Only a few months were passed in this institution, for, unable to qualify with boys of his own age, Claude became discouraged and returned home. Full of disappointment and bitter regret, the youth devoted two years to manual labor, only to find himself at the age of eighteen thoroughly dissatisfied with his position in life. With characteristic impetuosity he decided to make another attempt: "If I cannot be a priest," he exclaimed, "I can be a Marist Brother and teach the Word of God to savages." [3]

But Abbé Dubost, who had never relinquished the hope of seeing his godson a priest, now persuaded him to continue his studies under a capable tutor. Claude consented and after eight months of close application entered the Little Seminary of St. Jodard. So rapid was his progress that in 1838 he was ready to pursue his course in philosophy at l'Argentière; two years later he became a member of the Grand Seminary of Lyons. The young student whose piety, good humor, and charity made him a favorite among his professors was not slow in gaining the hearts of his confrères. He availed himself of every opportunity the Seminary afforded and in 1848 received the tonsure. Three years later Claude Marie Dubuis, having been elevated to the sacred ministry, was assigned to St. Martin de Fontaine near Lyons, in the diocese of Belley.

The greatest intimacy existed between the Curé M. Deschavennes and his assistant and before many months had passed the affability

[3] ABBÉ, J. P., *op. cit.*, p. 14.

of the young priest endeared him to all the inhabitants of St. Martin's. While every phase of parish interests received his attention, he showed preference for his work among the children; wherever the keen eye of the future missionary detected signs of a vocation to the priesthood he exerted every effort to encourage those so signally favored. Perhaps the struggles of his own boyhood were still fresh in his memory, for it is said of him that he organized classes in Latin for the more promising boys of the parish.

Two years passed quickly and happily, during which the Abbé still cherished his desire to devote his energies to the foreign missions. In 1845 he heard Bishop Odin who was traveling in France plead for far off Texas. The plea found a ready response in the heart of Abbé Dubuis who was one of the first to volunteer. The severing of ties which bound him to home and country caused far more anguish than the future missionary anticipated, but with him duty was stronger than love and he sailed for New Orleans, March 20, 1846.[4]

Although an ocean voyage in the forties was an event of anxiety and peril, the *Elizabeth Ellen* weathered the storms and reached the Mississippi River, May 24th. Abbé Dubuis continued his journey to the Barrens where he intended to familiarize himself with the English language before entering upon his active career as a missionary. In December he visited for the first time the "Episcopal Residence" of his Superior, Bishop Odin. "It was composed of three wretched huts containing seven or eight rooms, the whole surrounded by galleries," writes Abbé Domenech. "Divine services were celebrated in a small wooden chapel with scarcely room enough to contain the congregation. The heat of summer was insupportable and on wet days the rain came through the roof. One Sunday morning during Doctor Odin's sermon the rain fell in torrents, and finding its way through the chinks came

[4] *Idem.*, p. 21.

down in great drops on the congregation, who were obliged to open umbrellas in the church.''[5]

The sight of his Bishop's privations and sacrifices only increased the zeal of the Abbé, who eagerly accepted as his mission the northwestern section of the State with Castroville as his headquarters. Here, too, the prospect which greeted him on his arrival was not calculated to arouse enthusiasm. A few boards driven into the ground formed the walls of the pastor's home; a grass roof was his sole protection against the burning heats of summer and the piercing northers of winter; there were neither doors nor windows, and the only furnishing was an ox-skin, which was supposed to serve the purpose of a bed.

The stout heart of the missionary was not daunted. Immediately he began to take the census of his district, to organize a school, to teach the catechism, and to induce his parishioners to approach the sacraments. The poverty of the young priest during those pioneer days was deplorable. On one occasion he was obliged to ask the congregation to excuse him from preaching as he had eaten nothing for forty-eight hours. Realizing, however, that every mission needed patience, kindness, prudence, and prayer, he redoubled his efforts to overcome the indifference and religious apathy he encountered.

The fortitude of the missionary gradually won for him the confidence of his people and the events of the years 1847-49 made them realize that a Catholic priest is a valuable friend in material as well as in spiritual affairs. An eighteen months' drought, which destroyed vegetation, was followed by an epidemic of cholera during which the missionary, who was assistant physician, nurse, and comforter worked day and night with unequalled heroism. The entire State of Texas experienced the ravages of the scourge but the unfortunate Indian was the greatest sufferer. For years the Comanches and the Apaches had kept the settlers in hourly dread of raids, and, though many attempts were made to convert

[5] Abbé Domenech, *Adventures in Texas and Mexico*, p. 4, London, 1858.

them, the results, with rare exceptions, were discouraging. Abbé Dubuis, counting among his flock a few of the Comanches, who regarded him as the "Chief of the Great Spirit," realized that he could devote little of his time to their welfare. It was impossible to meet the demands of his settled parishioners, therefore, the Indians had to be neglected. Their numbers were so reduced, however, during the plague that they ceased to be a menace. The religious attitude of the people was likewise affected during those years of distress: Sunday was now observed as a day of prayer, Mass was well attended; and the congregation gathered at three o'clock in the afternoon for the rosary and vespers. The happy pastor reported that nearly every Catholic received Holy Communion on Easter Sunday, 1849.[6]

As a consequence of this revival of faith a larger building for Divine services was necessary. Undaunted by their total lack of funds Abbé Dubuis and Abbé Domenech, who had lately been assigned to Castroville, volunteered to be the architects, masons, and builders, if the regular mechanics of the village would be the instructors. The two missionaries gathered the rock from a nearby quarry, brought sand from the river, cut the trees, and shaped the beams. In order not to discontinue the school they taught in the morning and devoted the afternoons to building. For months the two priests worked so diligently that the new church was completed and solemnly dedicated to St. Louis, on Easter Sunday, 1850.[7]

The event was a memorable one, for the missionaries, besides furnishing a suitable dwelling for their Lord and Master, had given the colonists a practical lesson in economy. Their miserable huts were soon replaced with substantial houses of wood or stone, and land became threefold more valuable. As Abbé Domenech wrote, "Joy and confidence animated the inhabitants who saw their own prosperity increase while their colony prospered."[8]

[6] ABBÉ, J. P., *op. cit.*, p. 94.
[7] *Idem.*, p. 115.
[8] ABBÉ DOMENECH, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

While Abbé Dubuis shared the happiness of his people his achievement had cost him dearly. Five years of labor, want, and exposure had undermined his former vigorous constitution, and at the suggestion of Bishop Odin he departed for France in 1852. The opportunity of visiting his parents, while affording the fatigued missionary inexpressible joy, enabled him to elicit the interest of fourteen seminarians who accompanied him to Texas.

Shortly after his return Abbé Dubuis was appointed Vicar General of the diocese with his headquarters at San Antonio, a city whose excellent climate was attracting numerous settlers from various parts of the United States. Hearing that San Fernando's Church could not accommodate the large congregation which differed in customs and language, Bishop Odin consented to a division of the parish; on July 30, the present site of St. Mary's was purchased. To procure funds for the new edifice Abbé Dubuis traveled to Galveston and to New Orleans; he opened a subscription in San Antonio; and encouraged those who could not contribute of their wealth to offer their time. Work progressed rapidly and no laborer was more energetic than the Vicar General. "He was to be seen engaged wherever help was needed, whether it was moving stones, mixing mortar, hoisting lumber, or carrying material to the workmen."[9] The cornerstone of St. Mary's, chiseled by his own hand, bore the inscription, "Domus Dei, et Porta Coeli, Jan. 6, 1856." As soon as St. Mary's was ready for Divine services it was shared by the Americans and Germans while "the old Church," as San Fernando's was called, was reserved for the use of the Spanish, French and Italian Catholics of the city. Abbé Dubuis retained the pastorate of both churches.

The year previous to the Civil War ushered in a new era for the Vicar General. The death of Archbishop Blanc of New Orleans resulted in the elevation of Bishop Odin to the vacant See; and when his Grace paid his *ad limina* visit to Rome Abbé

[9] PARISOT-SMITH, *History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of San Antonio*, p. 148, San Antonio, 1897.

Dubuis accompanied him as far as France. Returning to Lyons after a short sojourn in the Eternal City, Archbishop Odin brought with him the Bulls which appointed Claude Marie Dubuis Bishop of Galveston. The consecration took place in the Grand Seminary of Lyons, November 23, 1862;[10] Archbishop Odin, assisted by Monseigneur Charbonnel, aged Bishop of Toronto, Canada, and Monseigneur Lyonnet, Bishop of Valence, was the consecrating prelate. There was general rejoicing at this family *fête*, solemnized in the city of Lyons; yet, in the midst of the celebrations, there sounded a note of alarm. America was at that very moment engaged in the horrors of civil war, and a return to the dioceses of the South was doubtful. On February 3, 1863, the newly consecrated Bishop, eager to be with his people, left France on board a sailing vessel, the *St. Germain*; accompanying him were sixty seminarians and religious, among whom was John Anthony Forest, the future Bishop of San Antonio.

Storm and calm delaying the ship, sixty days were consumed in crossing the Atlantic. But the energetic Bishop sought to keep his band so occupied that few experienced fatigue. Spiritual exercises were held in common, classes in theology were conducted daily, and on various occasions High Mass with all its solemnity and grandeur was celebrated by the Bishop.

To the relief of all on board, the *St. Germain* anchored safely at New Orleans. The city had but lately fallen into the hands of the Federalists and while Archbishop Odin greeted the travelers warmly, his heart was sorely afflicted. Fire, pillage, ruin, greeted him on every side.

Unable to go directly to his diocese, Bishop Dubuis hastened to Matamoras, Mexico, whence he made the trip overland. During his absence Galveston had been the scene of open hostilities and a discouraging sight greeted him on his entrance into his See. "The Cathedral is riddled with bullets," he wrote, "only on dry days can I say Mass within its walls. However, I must acknowledge

[10] ABBÉ, J. P., *op. cit.*, p. 142.

that our missionaries are loved and respected by all. Politics we have nothing to do with, and on the battle field the Catholic priest meets with none but brothers; consequently, Catholicism has attracted much admiration and gained respect and favor.'' [11]

Although conditions were serious it must be admitted that the sufferings of the Texans were slight in comparison with those inflicted on the Southerners of other States. True, there was a drain on the strength of the citizens, and on material resources, but Texas saw little of the horrors of invasion. Crops were planted and gathered while the conflict was in progress, and business went on with a degree of security that prevailed nowhere else in the South.[12] With the dawn of the Reconstruction days, however, she was subjected to the mischievous effects of the congressional policy, and the patience of her people was taxed to the limit by excessive taxation, unjust legislation, and indifference towards the general welfare.

In all these difficulties the people of the diocese of Galveston had the sympathy of their Bishop, who was tireless in his efforts to ameliorate their sufferings. While the churches and schools continued to receive his attention he was particularly anxious about another social need which had manifested itself during the War. In all the State of Texas there was not a hospital under Catholic auspices. During the crisis just passed the Ursuline Sisters of Galveston had furnished the army with a temporary base hospital, the first opened in the State. An extract, taken from their own records and published in the souvenir of their Diamond Jubilee, states that ''On September 10, 1861, the new wing of the Convent, which was then nearing completion, was offered to the authorities for hospital purposes, and several Ursulines volunteered their services as nurses. They served during the years 1861 and 1862, but their principal ministrations were performed after the battle of Galveston, which occurred on January 1, 1863.

[11] *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, vol. XXXVI, p. 464, Lyons, 1864.
[12] Garrison, *Texas*, p. 291.

Tenderly they cared for the sick and the wounded, who were brought in from the scenes of destruction wrought by the continuous shelling of the town.'' [13]

With the cessation of the War the Sisters had resumed their duties in the classroom, and the Bishop was again faced with the necessity of seeking religious nurses for the sick and indigent. Though several appeals had been made to the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, this noble organization was unable to meet the demands made on its resources. Confident that in France he would succeed in his purpose, Bishop Dubuis departed for Europe shortly after the adjournment of the Provincial Council which was held in Baltimore in 1866.

[13] *Souvenir of the Diamond Jubilee of the Ursuline Academy*, Galveston, 1923.

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Texas. (1866—1869).

The summer of 1866 found the Bishop in Lyons with his mission unfulfilled. His applications had elicited sympathy but they failed to secure the object of his quest. One community had promised subjects but at the last moment found itself unable to meet the engagement. Bishop Dubuis was sorely perplexed. He had been so confident of success that he had not hesitated to inform his people of the object of his journey. Must he now return to them and confess that he had failed? Remembering that Archbishop Odin had secured teaching communities for the Texas schools through his appeal to the religious of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, he addressed the following letter to Reverend Mother Angelique, the Superioress of the Monastery of Lyons, France:

*Reverend Mother:* Our Lord Jesus Christ, suffering in the persons of a multitude of the sick and the infirm of every kind, seeks relief at your hands. Already He has commissioned your community to exercise spiritual works of mercy in our vast diocese; to-day He begs you to accept the mission of corporal works of mercy by sending sisters to take charge of our hospitals and orphan asylums. We beseech you, then, to form according to the rules of the Order of the Incarnate Word, the subjects whom we send you by permission of His Eminence, Monseigneur de Bonald. It is a favor which the Incarnate Word requests of His daughters through His poor servant.

Your devoted friend,

C. M. Dubuis, *Bishop of Galveston.*

Seminary of Lyons, September 21, 1866.[1]

Moved by this plea Reverend Mother Angelique admitted to the monastery Miss Nanette Matelin, Miss Lucine Roussin, and Miss

[1] A copy of this letter is in the Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.

Josephine Escude, three religious from the Convent of Antiquaille who had volunteered their services to the Bishop. On September 23, 1866, Canon Galtier gave them the habit and bestowed upon them the names, Sister M. Blandine of Jesus, Sister M. Joseph of Jesus, and Sister M. St. Ange; they were henceforth to be known as the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.[2]

Two days after the ceremony of investiture the Sisters set sail for Texas. The preparations for their departure had been so hurried that there was barely sufficient time to change the religious habit received at Antiquaille for the provisional one designed by the religious of the Incarnate Word. An exact description of that habit is not given, but Sister Mary of Jesus, who has recorded the incidents of the foundation days, mentions the guimp, the veils, and the scapular. The last was of white flannel, on which were embroidered in red the letters, J. M. J.[3] Although no definite Rule had been formulated, the religious of Lyons gave the missionaries copies of the Constitutions, Directory, and Ceremonial of the Order of the Incarnate Word, so that the Sisters might study them and adapt them to their needs.

The voyage from France to New Orleans was made in the company of Bishop Dubuis who, on arriving in the latter city, found that business prevented his immediate departure for Texas. The three Sisters, obliged to continue their travels alone, reached Galveston safely where they were met by Reverend Chambodut, the Vicar General of the diocese. As the building which was to serve the purpose of convent and hospital was still under construction, the community was obliged to accept the hospitality of the Ursuline Nuns with whom they dwelt for several months.

The spring of 1867 found Mother Blandine and her companions in possession of the hospital, a simple two-storied frame structure. None of the comforts of life graced this 'Bethlehem' of eastern Texas; the very necessaries of life were lacking, the Sisters had

[2] *Annals of the Congregation.*

[3] *Memoirs of* Sister Mary of Jesus, Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.

little knowledge of the English language, and, to add to their trials, an epidemic of yellow fever which broke out in July raged until the end of the year. The little "Charity Hospital," as it was called, was soon filled with the plague-stricken, "the Sisters having under their care more than one hundred cases, professionally attended by Doctors Randall, Campbell, and Lancton, three prominent physicians of the time." [4]

Urged on by the charity that animated them to labor for Christ's poor, Mother Blandine and her two assistants rose to the height of their vocation. Totally oblivious to their own safety they passed the nights as well as the days at the bedside of their patients. But human endurance has its limits, as the Sisters realized, when, fatigued by long watches, Mother Blandine fell a victim to the disease and died, August 18, 1867. Sister St. Ange who likewise contracted the fever recovered after a long and painful illness.

While the struggling community was thus dying in its birth in Texas, the Monastery of Lyons had received other recruits. During the Lenten season of 1867, two young ladies asked to be admitted as candidates for the mission, and in June of the same year they were joined by two more who made similar requests. A regular course of instruction was now begun. The postulants were confided to the care of an exemplary religious who endeavored to train them in accordance with the true spirit of the Incarnate Word; and Reverend Mother Angelique, to whom "the four" as they were familiarly called by the community, were particularly dear, devoted a great part of her time to their spiritual formation. "My children," she was wont to say, "you are obliged to learn in four months as much as others are obliged to know after four years of study. You are the pillars on which the spirit of the Incarnate Word must rest; on you also depends the obligation of making it flourish in your nascent Congregation." [5]

[4] Wilkinson, C. H., *A Short History of St. Mary's Infirmary*, Galveston, 1916.

[5] *Memoirs of* Sister Mary of Jesus, Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.

On July 14, 1867, two of the postulants were clothed with the habit and received the names Sister M. Madeleine and Sister Martha. Two months later the other members of the missionary band were invested and called Sister M. Raphael and Sister Mary of Jesus.[6]

It has been mentioned that stress of circumstances prevented the Superiors of Lyons from designing a particular habit for the Sisters who left France in 1866, but at the second ceremony of investiture the religious garb was given, identical with that worn today by the Sisters of the San Antonio foundation. The guimp and the veils resembled those of the religious of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Lyons, but the dress was black. The scapular, which extended to the waist, was of the same color as the habit and bore, embroidered in red, the crown of thorns encircling the monogram of the Holy Name, I. H. S.; under this monogram a heart was placed surmounted by three nails and bearing the motto, "Amor Meus." Instead of the red leather girdle worn by the religious of the encloistered Order a cord of red worsted was substituted.[7]

After the ceremony of investiture the novices began their novitiate which, though short, was thorough and spiritual. Their exercises, performed apart from the other religious of the monastery, were supervised by a capable and responsible person, who initiated them into the practices of prayer and meditation. They were well instructed in the obligations pertaining to the vows; and their Mistress sought to inculcate a true love for the virtues of the Incarnate Word as exemplified in His active life. The training was practical in every sense of the word; they were taught how to hold chapters of election, to receive and train subjects, and were instructed in all matters that would be helpful to them in their new manner of life. A short Rule was drawn up which they

[6] *Annals of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio.*

[7] *Rule given Reverend Mother Madeleine on her departure for Galveston.* The manuscript copy is in the Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.

were to observe until such time as the Directory and Constitution would be ready.[8]

Although there was much to be done and time was limited, the fervor and earnestness of the novices enabled them to acquire in a few months what ordinarily requires years to accomplish. In all their difficulties and perplexities they were ably advised by Reverend Mother Angelique, who frequently exhorted them to observe their Rule faithfully. Greatly distressed by a report that the community of Galveston had changed the habit and replaced the veil with the cornette, she elicited a promise from the young novices that the religious garb as worn by them should be regarded as the one prescribed by the Rule and consequently subject to no change.

The departure of the novices for Texas was hastened by the news of the death of Mother Blandine. Realizing that if the work was to continue, recruits must be sent immediately, Reverend Mother Angelique was at the same time reluctant to expose those young and ardent lives to the danger of contagion. The decision was, therefore, left to themselves. "If their courage and desire for God's glory were sufficiently strong to brave the dangers of yellow fever, then raging in Galveston, they were free to go; otherwise, their departure would be deferred until the spring. With one accord the novices expressed a wish to leave immediately for Texas."[9] Letters from the mission strengthened them in their purpose. The community, reduced in numbers by the death of the Superioress, was sorely pressed; if aid did not come soon, the situation could no longer be sustained. In the early part of November, Bishop Dubuis arrived in Lyons, bringing with him two out-door Sisters from the Convent of Belmont who were destined for Victoria, Texas, and an elderly lady, the mother of Sister Raphael. The latter received the habit of a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word and with it the name Sister Mary of the Incarnation. It was Bishop Dubuis' intention to establish

[8] *Memoirs of* SISTER MARY OF JESUS.
[9] *Idem.*

a convent in San Antonio as soon as the community in Galveston was well organized, and in Sister Mary of the Incarnation he placed his hopes.

November 4, the date set for the departure, came at last, and the missionary band, consisting of two choir and two out-door nuns for the cloistered Order of Victoria, and five Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, left for Paris. Three days later the party reached Havre where they were joined by several Sisters of St. Joseph, by two Ursuline Sisters who were going to New Orleans; and by six young ladies from Ireland destined for Houston, Victoria, and San Antonio. Archbishop Odin, Bishop Dubuis, several priests and seminarians were also on board.

The voyage, lasting fourteen days, was a rough and stormy one, but New York was finally reached and the travelers boarded the train for New Orleans. Funds having become very scarce during the second stage of the journey, the religious were given an early introduction to the trials and deprivations attendant on missionary life. Arriving in New Orleans, the Sisters of St. Joseph with their traditional virtue of hospitality, opened their convent to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and urged on them the necessity of remaining some days in the city before completing their journey. Sister M. Madeleine, Sister Mary of Jesus, and Sister Martha accepted the generous offer while Sister Mary of the Incarnation and Sister Raphael found equally gracious hospitality among the Ursuline Nuns.

The yellow fever had almost disappeared by the time the missionaries reached the South, but the ravages of cholera followed so soon in its wake that even before the Sisters were able to leave New Orleans Sister Mary of the Incarnation had been overcome by the disease. As her case was not declared hopeless, it was decided that while Sister Raphael remained to care for her mother, the rest of the community should depart for Galveston.

December 2, 1867, was a dark and gloomy day; a drizzling rain was falling and the warm, heavy atmosphere presaged a coming

storm. Galveston presented a cheerless aspect to the three voyagers who aboard the *Josephine* sailed into the harbor. On leaving the ship they were attracted by a tall gaunt man, dressed in a black riding coat which reached to his heels; a red turned up shirt collar concealed half his face, and a cane carried in a jaunty manner added to the oddity of his appearance. Excitedly he hurried among the crowd inquiring, "Where are the Sisters for the Hospital? Where are my Sisters?" On presenting themselves the Sisters were hurried into an omnibus, and the individual in the riding coat, who was no other than the chaplain of the hospital, began to abuse Bishop Dubuis and his project. "Why had he sent these young Sisters to a place so lately the hot-bed of an epidemic? The air was still reeking wth pestilential contagion; they would meet a speedy and certain death." More amused than alarmed, Sister M. Madeleine and her companions were grateful that their long journey was ended, and the warm welcome given by Sister Joseph and Sister St. Ange who was still convalescing dispelled all fear. The morrow found the newcomers at their posts of duty, the wards and the kitchen respectively.

History has recorded little concerning the daily life of the Sisters yet it is easy to infer from the Memoirs of Sister Mary of Jesus that their many duties afforded them little leisure; moreover their youth and inexperience required the guidance of a skilled and capable Superioress, without whom a spirit of security could not be maintained. An incident which occurred shortly after the arrival of the second band of missionaries tended to emphasize the latter need.

The Sisters who had been sent to found the house in Galveston had, as has been stated elsewhere, adopted the cornette, but Sister M. Madeleine and her companions refused to imitate their example. Reverend Chambodut, the chaplain, several priests, and even Bishop Dubuis were inclined to favor the change, but Sister M. Madeleine urged the necessity of conforming to the regulations prescribed by the Rule. After reading the copy brought by the

second band of Sisters the Bishop decided that the veil was to be retained.[10]

Following this decision life in the community moved on uneventfully. There was little to console the Sister nurses, but they never complained and willingly undertook the care of four little orphans whose parents had died during the yellow fever epidemic. The one building, a lumber structure measuring seventy-three feet by thirty, served the double purpose of wards for the sick and accommodation for the children. Here, too, the Sisters arranged a little chapel, where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered daily. The garret was the only dwelling place they could give their Master, the Incarnate Word, and poverty was His sole adornment; but it was the best they could do and their sacrifices were rewarded by an increase of courage and perseverance. To their great happiness the chapel, begun previous to their arrival, was completed for Christmas, 1867, and the Blessed Sacrament was removed to more appropriate surroundings. The day was one of double significance for Sister M. Joseph, Sister St. Ange, and Sister Agnes were permitted to pronounce their vows. Sister Agnes, originally designated for the community of Victoria, had, when passing through Galveston, begged Bishop Dubuis to receive her as a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word and her request had been granted. Great rejoicings marked the day; the Christmas spirit reigned in all hearts, and brighter prospects seemed to be in store for the hard working missionaries. Before nightfall, however, it was evident that Sister Martha had spent her first and last Christmas in the service of the Incarnate Word. Complaining of feeling ill she was advised to retire early. When the five o'clock bell rang the next morning she attempted to rise with the community, but fainted. After three weeks of patient suffering she went to her reward, the second victim of yellow fever.[11]

On hearing of the death of Sister Martha, Reverend Mother

[10] *Idem.*

[11] *Idem.*

Angelique wrote to Mother Joseph who had been appointed Superioress, that no aspirants had presented themselves for the mission. The only postulant then in training was not strong enough to sustain the fatigue of the voyage or the privations of the new foundation, and the Council had refused to admit her to investiture.

On hearing this decision the young postulant (her name is not given) threw herself at the feet of Reverend Mother Angelique and implored her to ask the Consulters for a re-hearing. Alleging that victims were required for the establishment of all religious institutions, she declared that she would gladly offer her life to the Incarnate Word if in return He would grant health and strength to those who were furthering His interests in the New World. So earnestly did this young girl plead her cause that her request was granted, and she was clothed in the habit of a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word. Sister Mary of Jesus does not say when this generous little soul came to the mission, although she does mention that "the Master soon required of her her sacrifice in return for which He was pleased to preserve for many years the lives of the Sisters for whom it was given."[12]

The Community at this time numbered seven; all were French and none spoke English well. Hence, it is not surprising that the first three American candidates, who were introduced by Reverend Chambodut in January, 1868, failed to secure careful training. Understanding no language but their own they could form no adequate idea of novitiate life, nevertheless, Bishop Dubuis desired to give them the habit on March 25. The Sisters, while deeming it prudent to receive only two of the postulants, yielded to the wishes of the Vicar General and admitted the three candidates to investiture. The ceremony, attended with pomp and show, took place in the convent chapel which was filled with the curious; features such as these are totally contrary to the simplicity pre-

[12] *Idem.*

scribed for the investiture of a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word, and it is safe to state that the impression was not lasting. At any rate the three novices did not persevere.[13]

The new year ushered in a period of healthfulness for the people of Galveston, and the Sisters found themselves without a patient in their hospital. Through the influence of the Vicar General the city authorities decided to confide to them the care of the sick; accordingly, on May 7, 1868, they took charge of the City Hospital then under the direction of Doctor Clarke Campbell.

The disorderly condition of this institution defies description. Four large rooms formed the only accommodation for the men; the women were gathered together in a few small rooms on one side of the yard. The neglected patients, too, presented a pitiable sight. Here, indeed, was a rich field in which the Sister of Charity could display her zeal and prove her love for Christ's afflicted. But even here she was to pay dearly for success. Not understanding the Sisters' mission among them, the sick would not allow them to approach their beds. All expostulations were useless, and as the Sisters could not adequately express themselves in English, they waited patiently until they could study a way out of the difficulty.

In the meantime they were not idle but busied themselves during a period of eight days with mending and arranging the scanty supply of linen and bedding. Although their comfort was well provided for, they found little consolation in this fact; they had a definite purpose in life, and were willing to avail themselves of energetic measures to attain their end. Regardless of consequences they decided to take matters in their own hands and have a thorough cleaning of wards and patients. Having recommended themselves to the Incarnate Word, they began their task on the ninth day after their arrival. A large room adjoining the Sisters' apartments was the first to receive their attention. When all mattresses were removed from the beds, exposing an amount

[13] *Idem.*

of rubbish carefully hidden by the patients, a scene occurred which would have been amusing but for the earnestness of the participants. The sick tried to save what they considered their treasures, but the Sisters held on firmly, at the same time expostulating vigorously in French. Finally, the latter triumphed and the articles were consigned to the fire. The process of cleaning then went on quietly; the beds were neatly made, an extra pillow was placed on each, the blankets were washed, and the whole apartment assumed a cheerful appearance.

From that day resistance ended; the ministrations of the nurses were received with every mark of good will and appreciation, and the Sisters turned their attention to the wards occupied by the negro patients. If the condition of the white people was deplorable, what must have been the state of those unfortunates whose lot was made harder by the reconstruction policies then in force! Their very physical surroundings aroused constant terror, great waves from the Bay frequently inundating their wretched hovels. Touched by such misery the missionaries vied with each other in caring for these, the least of Christ's little ones. Towards one poor negress they were particularly attentive—perhaps, because her case was more pitiable than the rest. Unused to such attention the patient, while expressing her surprise, admitted that she did not understand the motive that prompted such gentleness. The Sisters explained as best they could that it was the charity of Christ, the Incarnate Word, which urged them to labor for the suffering, whereupon the grateful negress expressed a desire to know "that Christ" her nurses loved; she was instructed, baptized, and given the name of Mary. A few weeks later, "Mary," the first fruit offered the Incarnate Word in the City Hospital in Galveston, ended her life of suffering by a saintly death.

While the community was thus engaged in errands of mercy at the City Hospital, their own institution, the name of which had been changed to St. Mary's Infirmary, was not prospering. At the suggestion of Doctor Wilkinson they decided to enter their bid for the care of the sick marines and early in July, 1869,

received the award. St. Mary's now entered upon a new career. A larger building had to be erected to accommodate the patients; moreover, as the orphans also increased in numbers, they, too, had to have adequate quarters.

A new home located on a tract of land three miles down the Island was purchased by Bishop Dubuis and in 1874 the children, now numbering one hundred and seventeen, were transferred to the new institution, which was known as St. Mary's Orphanage.[14]

[14] WILKINSON, *op. cit.*

## CHAPTER V.

Reverend Mother M. Madeleine.—The Foundations in San Antonio. Santa Rosa.—St. Joseph's Orphanage.
1869—1872.

In the winter of 1868 a third band of missionaries, Sisters St. Pierre, Paul, André, John, and Francis, arrived in Galveston accompanied by Reverend Chambodut. Like those who preceded them to Texas, these religious had made their novitiate in Lyons and their arrival was a welcome addition to the community.

For some time Bishop Dubuis had been intent on opening a hospital in San Antonio. In fact Sister Mary of the Incarnation had been designated as the Superioress of that institution; but the disease which she contracted on the eve of her departure from New Orleans having left her a hopeless invalid, the project was deferred. Towards the close of March, 1869, Bishop Dubuis felt that the growth of the community justified him in extending its sphere of usefulness and selecting Sister M. Madeleine, Sister St. Pierre, and Sister Agnes he made arrangements for the new foundation. A document, dated March 29, 1869, and signed by Bishop Dubuis, records the nomination of Sister M. Madeleine as the first Superioress:

On the date mentioned below, Monseigneur Claude Marie Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston, nominated our Sister Marie Madeleine of Jesus, a professed religious of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word of Galveston, Superioress of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio, to which city His Lordship has sent her to administer her charge in the Hospital known as the Santa Rosa; which nomination has been made and confirmed by Monseigneur himself, and the aforesaid Reverend Mother has been received and recognized by the Community of Galveston and has entered upon her duties in San Antonio.

C. M. Dubuis, Ev. de Galveston.[1]

March 29, 1869.

[1] Original French copy in Archives at Motherhouse, San Antonio.

A copy of the Constitution as drawn up by the religious of the Incarnate Word of Lyons, in 1867, having been given Reverend Mother M. Madeleine, the Bishop attached to it the following letter:

"We charge you most earnestly, dear Daughters of the Incarnate Word, to observe religiously, as far as circumstances will permit, the little regulations of the day and the various precepts of conduct here adjoined, knowing that thereby you will share in the prayers, exercises, and good works practised in the various monasteries of France and America.

"Our dear Hospital Daughters ought not to forget that the Community of Lyons which interests itself so much in their welfare, rejoices in the fact that the spirit which animates them is one, and that the Rule they follow is a faithful copy of their own.

"In charging them with the care of the sick, the Community of Lyons has had but one object in view, the greater glory of the Incarnate Word; and you ought to esteem yourselves happy, dear Daughters, to have been chosen by our Saviour to be the instruments of that work of zeal and devotion. Considering yourselves as a new branch destined to special work, remember that it is the Order of the Incarnate Word that has given you life, and you will live and serve only in so far as you hold yourselves firmly and holily united to the heart of your Mother.

"The Rule which we place in your hands is well calculated to maintain that spirit of unity, that filial attachment to the Order in general, and to the Community (Lyons) in particular, which will always consider you its children.

"Follow it faithfully, then, that peace and tranquillity may be yours and that you may share in the abundant benedictions which the Incarnate Word is pleased to bestow on all the members of His Order; this will be the surest means of securing His protection for your establishment, called to do so much good among His suffering members."

C. M. Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston.[2]

With this letter of approbation from the Bishop supplemented by his advice and encouragement, and by the good wishes of the Sisters to whom they said farewell, the three missionaries started for their new field of labor.

Reverend Mother M. Madeleine Chollet was but twenty-three years of age when placed in charge of the foundation in San

[2] Original copy in the Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.

Antonio, nevertheless, she enjoyed the confidence of the Bishop and the wholehearted support of her companions. Born in Roanne, France, on February 7, 1846, of pious and devoted parents, she had been reared in the very atmosphere which surrounded the foundress of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament. The chapel connected with the Jesuit College in Roanne, where Jeanne de Matel had passed many hours and where her mission had been made known to her by heavenly means, was a favorite retreat of Louise who at the age of twenty-one decided to devote her life to the cause of religion. At the suggestion of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word of Lyons, then actively engaged in assisting the newly founded community in Texas, she offered herself to Bishop Dubuis for foreign missionary service and was accepted. Entering the Lyons Novitiate, she received the habit of a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word, July 14, 1867, and with it the name Sister Marie St. Madeleine of Jesus; in 1868, when the second band of Sisters left for the plague-stricken city of Galveston, Sister M. Madeleine was one of the number.[3]

Bishop Dubuis had recognized in this young religious the zeal and courage which would face and surmount difficulties. Nothing seemed to deter her when duty commanded; yet, in her every act there was such simplicity and charity, such genuine and apparent sympathy for the suffering, that she won all who came in contact with her. Trained in the novitiate of the monastery at Lyons, Sister M. Madeleine had acquired a sincere love for regular observance and would tolerate no half measures in the service of God. Though gentle in manner, she was inflexible regarding principles and fearlessly upheld the Rule even at the risk of incurring general disfavor. The determined stand she took in regard to the question of changing the habit from that prescribed by the Rule of 1867 preluded her long life of service to the Congregation. With the Annalist it may be truthfully said: "She loved to do great things unnoticed and in silence, and her charity grew as the

[3] *Community Annals.*

demands upon it multiplied. To the many virtues that adorned her life was added a remarkable fund of common sense. Her characteristic humility, sweet simplicity, and singleness of purpose, which aimed solely at pleasing God, served most effectively in enforcing her familiar exhortation: 'My Sisters, you should live and labor only for God.' ''[4]

It is not surprising, then, that Bishop Dubuis selected Sister M. Madeleine for the office of Superioress of the first Catholic hospital in San Antonio; knowing that discouraging obstacles would arise, he was confident that she would cope with every situation. That he had not overestimated her ability the future revealed.

As railroads were still unknown in many parts of Texas in the late sixties, the old-fashioned stage-coach brought Reverend Mother M. Madeleine and her companions from Galveston to San Antonio, a distance of over two hundred and eighty-nine miles. Had the Sisters been able to promise themselves rest and shelter at the end of their journey, there might have been some compensation for the hardships endured, but even this comfort was denied them. Before departing from Galveston they were informed that the house destined as their convent had been burned and Bishop Dubuis had made no arrangement for their accommodation. This house, up to the time of its destruction used as a parish rectory, was situated on the corner of Commerce and Cameron Streets, on the site occupied at present by St. Joseph's Orphanage. Fathers Sary, Neraz, Fleury, and Greimbuhl were stationed there at the time of the fire, as were two Benedictines, Fathers Emelian and Horman, who cared for the German population of the city.[5] Besides depriving the Sisters of a home, the fire occasioned a severe loss to the diocese for many valuable records were destroyed. A

[4] *Idem.*

[5] The Benedictine Fathers were brought to Texas by Archbishop Odin in 1859 and assigned to the old San José Mission. There they attempted to conduct a school, but the surroundings were unfavorable and the Fathers returned to Pennsylvania.

less courageous band would have waited until assured of a home, but personal comfort received little consideration from these missionaries. Arriving in San Antonio, tired, unknown, homeless, they were warmly received by the Ursuline Nuns with whom they dwelt for six months.[6] The kindness and charity of these religious towards the homeless Sisters of Charity have never been forgotten, and a bond of warmest friendship has ever existed between the two communities. It was in the Ursuline chapel that Reverend Mother St. Pierre made her perpetual vows on August 15, 1869.[7]

The circumstances under which those vows were made were by no means assuring; there was nothing to stimulate the enthusiasm of this youthful religious. Hopes for the success and growth of the Community were far from bright, but with implicit trust she consecrated her life to the Incarnate Word and left the future to His good pleasure. Courage and confidence were the two strong characteristics of the "Rock" on which the Congregation was to lean for many years.

While the Sisters were enjoying the hospitality of the Ursuline Nuns, Bishop Dubuis was hurrying the reconstruction of the hospital. Frequently he was assistant-mason, bricklayer, and carpenter, and so rapidly did the work progress that the building was completed for the feast of St. Teresa, October 15. The next six days found the community hard at work preparing for the opening of their hospital; since means to engage help were lacking, the heaviest tasks were performed by themselves. These pioneers had consecrated their lives absolutely to the service of the poor, and they did not place in the balance any hardship the work demanded. Cheerfully they partook of their noon-day meal—a piece of bread brought from the Ursuline Convent in the morning—and bravely

[6] From a notice written by Reverend Mother St. Pierre we learn that the Sisters remained at the Ursuline Convent from March 31, to October 21, 1869. *Archives at the Motherhouse.*

[7] Act of profession signed by Reverend J. Anstaett, Vicar General. *Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.*

and unfalteringly prepared for their future mission. On October 21, 1869, Reverend Mother Madeleine and her companions took formal possession of their first house in San Antonio.

Convent and hospital occupied the same building, which was called "Santa Rosa Infirmary" in honor of America's first canonized Saint. It was a two-storied adobe structure, consisting of a few wards and private rooms for the sick, a small chapel, and a few extremely poor apartments for the community. The furniture of the last mentioned was in keeping with the canvas-ceiled room; each Sister was provided with a simple cot and a low chair, which served the purpose of wardrobe and dressing table. Poverty in all its reality existed in "Santa Rosa," nevertheless, it would have been difficult to find a happier or more cheerful community than that which assembled for the foundation Mass, December 3, 1869. No grand celebration marked this unpretentious beginning, but it was a momentous event in the life of the Sisterhood, and from that day to the present St. Francis Xavier's feast is gratefully commemorated by the Congregation.

As soon as the necessary accommodations were completed the Sisters inserted an announcement in the *Daily Herald* of November 18, 1869:

> The undersigned take pleasure in announcing to the public that on the first of December, the Hospital and the Infirmary under the management of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word will be ready to receive patients. The Hospital will be opened to all persons without distinction of nationality or creed.[8]

Patients made application for admittance at once. The hospital had no other source of income save that derived from their patrons; and as arrangements were made to receive a number of charity patients, Reverend Mother M. Madeleine frequently found the community in straitened circumstances. To provide for the comforts of the sick, the Sisters imposed privations on themselves; frequently they went without supper in order to bestow their own scanty sustenance upon the poor who called at their door for aid.

[8] A copy of this paper is in the Incarnate Word College Library.

In addition to their difficulties they were temporarily deprived of the ready assistance and willing cooperation of their Bishop. As the time for the convocation of the Ecumenical Council was at hand, Archbishop Odin and Bishop Dubuis departed for Rome. Arriving in the Eternal City about the second of December, the two prelates were received in a private audience by His Holiness Pius IX, who made the kindliest inquiries about the missions, and imparted to Texas a special blessing.

The sessions of the Council had scarcely begun when Archbishop Odin who had become critically ill was obliged to withdraw to his native village in France. Through the frequent and detailed letters of Bishop Dubuis, the Archbishop was able to follow the movements of the Council, and the debates concerning the immediate promulgation of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility elicited his keenest interest. To the grief of his devoted friend, Bishop Dubuis, Archbishop Odin did not live to hear the decisions of the Vatican Council regarding the dogma but went to his reward on May 25, 1870. His death was like his life, full of suffering and resignation; and though he was apparently alone when the end came, two continents mourned his loss. "The death of the saintly Archbishop of New Orleans was announced on the 31st day of May,"[9] wrote Cardinal Gibbons, who was then attending the Council, and Bishop Dubuis in a letter to a relative of the Archbishop said: "All the Fathers of the Council experienced a profound sorrow at the announcement of his death, but all were unanimous in saying that the saintly Archbishop prayed for the Council. Public prayers were offered by all his friends for the repose of his soul."[10]

At the close of the Council, the Bishop of Galveston left Rome for France, where another sorrow awaited him. The two countries whose ecclesiastical representatives were most opposed to the decisions of the Vatican Council were then engaged in the bloody

[9] GIBBONS, J. CARDINAL, *A Retrospect of Fifty Years*, vol. 1, p. 157, Baltimore, 1916.

[10] Letter is cited by ABBÉ, J. P., *op. cit.*, p. 193.

contest of the Franco-Prussian War, and reports of France's first defeats were already heard in Paris. Sadly Bishop Dubuis sailed for his mission where the needs of his vast diocese claimed his immediate attention and gave him little time to follow the events which occurred in Europe. The community which he had established in San Antonio greeted him warmly on his return. Silently but effectively the Sisters had been fulfilling the duties of their mission and their absolute trust in Providence had received its reward. On September 16, 1870, Miss Silvia Simpasteur, the niece of Reverend Francis Bouchu, was received in the postulate; four months later she was joined by Miss Maria Esparza and Miss Anastasia Krawiec.[11]

The question of the place of novitiate now presented itself. Should the postulants go to Galveston or remain in San Antonio for their training? Bishop Dubuis decided that the novitiate should be made in San Antonio.[12] This was no innovation or deviation from principle, for the Bishop, guided by the Rule of the cloistered Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, intended making the San Antonio foundation independent as soon as it was self-supporting. Although Santa Rosa was still struggling for existence the promise which it gave for the future justified the decision. Moreover, the distance between Galveston and San Antonio, and the lack of railroad facilities were considerations which, no doubt, hastened the separation.

As the novitiate in San Antonio increased, the professed Sisters of Galveston who had been sent to aid the Community returned to their own convent; among these was Sister Agnes, Reverend Mother Madeleine's first companion. For some time after the separation the appointment of the Superioresses remained in the hands of the Bishop, who on one occasion announced his intention of naming Sister St. Pierre Superioress of the Galveston house. On hearing this Reverend Mother M. Madeleine with her characteristic vivacity exclaimed: "No, no, Monseigneur, if you take her,

[11] *Community Records.*

[12] *Annals of the Congregation.*

I also will go. It is true we are different in character, but we cannot live apart. We must work together."[13] And they did work together, those two pioneers of saintly memory. As time brought growth and development, and also changes in government, Reverend Mother M. Madeleine became Reverend Mother St. Pierre's faithful advocate and assistant and for nineteen years fulfilled the duties of her office. Death alone severed the link which bound those two devoted religious.

The establishment of the independent house and the erection of the novitiate required that provision be made for the proper training of the subjects. Sister St. Pierre, a religious eminently qualified both spiritually and intellectually, was appointed Mistress of Novices and immediately assumed the duties of her office. In May, 1871, San Fernando's Church was the scene of the Community's first investiture ceremony: Miss Silvia Simpasteur received the habit and with it the name Sister Mary Francis Regis; one month later Miss Maria Esparza and Miss Anastasia Krawiec were invested and called Sister M. Claude and Sister M. Joseph. The community annals give prominence to the labor of sacrifice and love which these devoted pioneer Sisters inaugurated in the San Antonio foundation and their names will frequently appear in these pages. Mother Joseph lived to see the preparations made for the celebration of the Congregation's golden jubilee; Mother Francis was one of the victims of the fire which destroyed St. John's Orphanage in 1912, and two years later Mother Claude went to her reward.[14]

The addition of three more subjects made posible the benefits of community life. The tentative Rule given in 1867 had been based on that used by the Hospital Sisters of the Incarnate Word in France, but differences in environment and association required modifications and adjustments. These latter were embodied in the Rule drawn up and signed by Bishop Dubuis. A little document entitled the "Directory," and dated April 22, 1872, reduced

[13] *Annals of the Congregation.* [14] *Community Records.*

to a system the practices regulating the exercises of piety, the works of charity, and the domestic details of the Community. In formulating the Constitution and Directory, the founders sought to include such regulations as would secure and perpetuate the spirit peculiar to a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word: namely, the spirit of charity, humility and obedience. So well was this work accomplished that the details of these codes are substantially the same as those embodied in the Constitutions of today.

The organization of the Community along approved conventual lines was a great encouragement for the Sisters as well as for the Bishop, who watched each step of growth and development with the deepest interest. To save it from the possibility of future disaster, he determined to place the Community under his episcopal sanction, and the following letter evidences the fulfillment of his design:

We, Claude Marie Dubuis, by the Grace of God and the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Galveston and San Antonio, have examined and approved the Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, which Sisters are under the Rule of St. Augustine. We ordain that the present Constitutions for the above named Sisters, whom, by our Episcopal authority, we have established in the city of San Antonio, Texas, be observed in their house in San Antonio, by all the Sisters there, and all the Sisters depending thereon. We do not pretend, by virtue of the regulations prescribed in these Constitutions, to impose any obligation under pain of sin, except that which naturally accompanies the infraction of the vows, or of the virtues in matters of importance. . . . For the present We give with our approbation, Our Apostolic blessing to all those who are or ever will be true members of this little Congregation. We pray that God may give you the grace, Our very dear Sisters and well beloved Daughters in Christ, and the will to observe these Constitutions, to which We affix Our Episcopal seal.

The twenty-second day of September of the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-two.

(Signed) C. M. Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston.[15]

Next to Bishop Dubuis Reverend Mother Madeleine was the guiding influence of the Sisters, and her exceptional ability was

[15] Original in French in Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.

recognized and appreciated by all. Gladly would the Community have re-elected her at the expiration of her term of office in 1872, but so earnestly did she insist upon retiring that the Bishop, constrained to accept her resignation, appointed in her stead Reverend Mother St. Pierre.[16]

The first consideration of the new Superioress was to provide a home for the orphans. A tract of land situated on what was then considered the outskirts of the city was secured, and, assisted by generous friends, the Sisters undertook the construction of a plain adobe building. Reverend E. M. Buffard, Vicar General of the diocese, offered to supervise the work and so interested was Bishop Dubuis that he made two trips from Galveston to San Antonio by stage-coach to note the progress of the home. The contract for the building was given to Mr. Theodore Engelhardt, a conscientious friend and adviser, who has rendered invaluable service to the Sisters during the last fifty years. Not a house has been built by the Congregation but Mr. Engelhardt has either drafted the plans or supervised the construction. In this particular case the work of the contractor must have been exceptionally trying, for owing to a scarcity of funds Reverend Mother St. Pierre was unwilling to incur a heavy debt. As a consequence the home was not ready for occupancy until October, 1874. On the ninth of the month Bishop Dubuis blessed the building which became known as St. Joseph's Orphanage, and the children were transferred from the hospital to their new home. The first community of St. Joseph's consisted of Mother Madeleine, Superioress; Sister Francis, Directress of the Orphans, Sister Bernard and Sister Mary of Jesus. The last named Sister, it will be remembered, came to Texas with Mother M. Madeleine and had subsequently transferred from Galveston to San Antonio. She was now to play an important part in the history of the first orphanage and to win for herself the title of the "Heroine of the Prairies."

Joyous in the anticipation of widening their sphere of useful-

[16] *Annals of the Congregation.*

ness, the community centered all their energies in their own spiritual duties and in the instruction of the children confided to their care; yet, despite their endeavors, the problem of providing for their charges was frequently a perplexing one. As the support of the children depended entirely on the exertions of the Sisters, heroic efforts were often demanded to make all ends meet. At times the resources of the community were so reduced as to barely supply the needs of the moment; still, neither the Sisters nor the children were ever in actual want. A little incident which occurred before the orphans left the hospital proves how confidence in God always brought timely aid. Reverend Mother St. Pierre was one morning in the kitchen giving directions for the dinner of the patients. Learning that there was no meat left for the Sisters and the children, she remarked: "Well, Sister, we shall have to do without meat again today as there is not a cent in the house wherewith to buy more." A child who was present but who apparently was paying no attention to the conversation suddenly left the room. In a short time she returned carrying a large basket which she handed to Reverend Mother St. Pierre. "Here, Big Mamma," (the children always called Reverend Mother St. Pierre 'Big Mamma,' and Reverend Mother M. Madeleine 'Little Mamma'), "is meat for the dinner of the Sisters and the girls. Don't be displeased with me for going, I could not help it. Mr. Arnaud sends this and will not charge you." The child, acting on the impulse of the moment, had appealed to one of the store-keepers in the neighborhood who, from that day, became a liberal friend of the institution. Others of the city were equally generous towards the orphans but as the number of children increased the contributions were insufficient. In this crisis Sister Mary of Jesus requested Reverend Mother St. Pierre to procure a team and allow her to go through the country soliciting aid. Although Sister was well able to manage a horse, there were reasons why the permission was not readily granted. Texas was still, in many sections, a trackless prairie; her only companion on these journeys would be an orphan boy, eight or nine years of

age, and stories of accidents that befell travelers in the sparsely settled regions were frequently told. These considerations made the venture seem hazardous. However, Reverend Mother St. Pierre who dearly loved the orphans realized the necessity of making some provision for their maintenance; consequently, Sister Mary of Jesus received her team.

From now on there is something almost romantic in the story of her adventures. To protect herself from the varying changes of the Texas climate, Sister Mary of Jesus procured a costume which, on account of its oddity as well as its utility, gave her great delight. It consisted of a soldier's overcoat, which reached to the ankles, a pair of heavy boots, and a large straw hat. This attire so completely disguised her that many persons, seeing her for the first time, would stand gazing in amazement and then ask, "Who, or what are you?" She would unbutton the coat and show her habit, thoroughly amused at the situation. While traveling she kept a brace of pistols near her which was the terror of the Sisters who, later in the history of the Community, accompanied her to and from the missions. Recollections of those experiences on the prairies are thus told by Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart:

"On a certain morning in the latter part of August Sister Mary of Jesus was up at two a. m.; her horses were fed, the provisions were packed and stored away in the wagon, her pistols were placed just where she could lay her hands on them, her old coat was on the wagon seat; and at half past three she was at the door calling for the Sisters. 'Thin ones only, please' announced our guide, 'I do not want to kill my horses.' 'The thin,' or small Sisters were permitted the privilege of a three days trip with Sister Mary of Jesus and her highly prized horses. The days were usually pleasant if we except the heat and the continuous jolting over rough roads in a springless wagon; the nights, however, were dreaded by all except Sister. After tying her horses to the wheels of the wagon, she spread her blanket on the ground, said her night prayers, took out her pistols, and, placing them at a convenient distance, slept as peacefully as if in her bed at home. As for us there was little rest or sleep. We sat upright in the wagon, rosary beads in hand, frightened at the howling of the coyotes and wolves and starting at every sound, real or imaginary. Towards morning, overcome by fatigue, we sank into a heavy sleep. Many

a time, on similar occasions, we awoke, covered with dew; nevertheless, our hardships did not kill us, or even injure our health."

Only boundless confidence in God could impart such courage. With a little orphan boy for a companion Sister Mary of Jesus traveled through the wildest parts of Texas, where in all probability no man would venture without an armed escort; and never during the nine years of her journeyings did she receive an uncivil word. The people she met, though perfect strangers to her and her mission, treated her kindly and with the greatest respect. It was interesting to hear her relate how she was received at the government posts in various parts of Texas; how she had to dine at the right side of the commanding officer; how her horses were attended to, and how her wagon was filled with fodder and provisions. Her tours lasted, generally, about five or six weeks. And how eagerly the younger members of the Community looked forward to her homecomings! They would group themselves around her and listen to the stories of her travels through the prairies, of her escapes from wild animals, and, if she was called away or interrupted in the midst of her narrative, her youthful audience would be able to tell her just where to resume her account. To their impressionable minds Sister Mary of Jesus was an ideal missionary and a heroine, and many longed to share her adventures.

More admirable still was the Providence of God manifested in her regard. She knew practically nothing of the geography of Texas; yet, she never lost her way or suffered injury of any kind. Two little incidents told by herself are well remembered by the older members of the Community.

"Years ago I passed ten days in the neighborhood of the canyons of Devil's river without seeing a human being; not even an animal came in sight. For three days I was unable to make a fire, for my fuel was exhausted. To add to my misery there was not a drop of water to be found. On the third day, heart sick and weary, I bade the boy drive the horses while I kept up the search for water. At some distance from the wagon I fell on my knees, and if I ever uttered a fervent prayer it was then: 'O Mary, O my Mother,' I said, 'we are going to die here of starvation

and thirst. Do, my beloved Mother, send us some water and guide us to shelter.' I arose, feeling confident that, unworthy as I was, my prayer would be answered. I walked on until I came to a ravine where a few Spanish daggers grew. On a flat rock I saw something shining and going nearer I found it was a pool of water. My joy was great and no words could express my gratitude to my heavenly Mother. I called the boy and with the aid of a clean towel, which I soaked in the pool, I filled six buckets of water for the horses. Then the little child and I having slaked our thirst we filled our canteens for the rest of our journey." . . . . "On another occasion I left the wagon to look for water, telling the boy to drive slowly in order that I might keep the team in sight. Going out among the rocky ravines, of which there were many in the place, and looking into the caves, I came face to face with a mountain wolf. He stopped and stared at me; I folded my arms and looked at him. What was I to do? I had left my pistols in the wagon. I dared not run, for that would show fear. Recommending myself to the Heart of Jesus, I walked leisurely away, followed by my shaggy friend or enemy—I knew not which. At some little distance I ventured to look back and found to my relief that the wolf had disappeared. Now, I thought, he has gone and will return with a pack of his kind. Going up to the wagon, I unharnessed the horses, and led them to another spot; I made a fire, cooked our supper, and having put the child to bed in the wagon I sat on the front seat with pistol in hand ready for any emergency. But the Heart that is ever watching took care of us, and we had no further trouble with the wolf or any of his acquaintances."

Another devoted worker for the orphans was Sister Stephen whose efforts in their behalf ceased only with age and infirmity. The building of railroads put an end to these dangerous trips but for some years the team was at the disposal of the Sisters as they went back and forth to their missions.

Increased traveling facilities occasioned other changes. As the population grew rapidly Bishop Dubuis felt the impossibility of making a thorough visitation of his vast diocese. In 1874, at his request, Rome divided Texas into the dioceses of Galveston, San Antonio and the Vicariate of Brownsville; and Bishop Dubuis was given his choice. It cost him no small sacrifice to choose between Galveston and San Antonio; however, as the former had been the seat of the first bishopric, it received his preference. No attempt will be made to express what this decision meant to the

spiritual daughters of this great missionary. Conscious of his true and tried devotion, they had felt themselves strong in their purpose, and his own reachings after human souls had been to them a continuous inspiration; however, in Bishop Dominic Anthony Pellicer he left them a faithful friend and guide. Born in St. Augustine, Florida, and instructed by the Jesuit Fathers at Spring Hill College, the first Bishop of San Antonio was a strong advocate of Catholic education.[17] His years of experience as parish priest, army chaplain, and vicar general had given him a deep insight into human nature, and his first visit to Texas convinced him of the absolute necessity of increasing the number of schools in his diocese. At his suggestion Reverend Mother St. Pierre made preparations for a further development of the Community's activities: in 1875 she opened San Fernando's School in San Antonio to which she assigned Sister Francis and Sister Bernard.

Desirous that this new work might succeed Reverend Mother St. Pierre had recourse to her patron, St. Joseph, to whom she made a novena for subjects capable of continuing this all-important task. On March 19, 1875, Bishop Pellicer announced the arrival of three young ladies from Alabama; two months later he introduced a candidate from New Orleans.[18]

Undoubtedly St. Joseph answered her prayer, for in Sister Stanislaus, Sister Teresa, and Sister St. John Reverend Mother received three teachers whose devoted services to the cause of Catholic education have helped to formulate the system so successfully functioning in the Congregation today. Bishop Pellicer's interest did not end here; each time he visited Alabama and Louisiana he succeeded in procuring valuable subjects. One of his first official acts as Bishop was to preside at the elections held on January 2, 1875, at St. Joseph's Orphanage, when he confirmed the following decisions: Superioress, Reverend Mother St. Pierre; Assistant, Sister Francis; Treasurer, Mother Madeleine; Secretary, Sister

[17] CLARKE, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 404.
[18] *Community Records.*

Claude.[19] In addition to the duties of Superioress, Reverend Mother St. Pierre was assigned those of Mistress of Novices until such time as the Community could furnish a Sister for that office.

The decade following the Reconstruction days was an important one for Texas. Immigration increased and San Antonio became a thriving city. The site selected for the hospital having proved unfavorable, owing to the noise from the market-place and the activities around the court house, a change was deemed necessary. In the summer of 1875 it was decided to transfer the patients to the building occupied by the orphans, who were to take up their residence in the former hospital. All the labor involved in this move was assumed by the Sisters, because their scanty treasury did not permit them to engage help. The personnel was by no means proportionate to the work required, but the spirit of charity which animated the individual supplied for the deficiency of numbers. Often having spent a night at the bedside of the sick, the Sisters would pass the day in the laundry or the kitchen. To meet all the demands and bear the burdens poverty imposed on them, the Community arose at four o'clock and often toiled far into the night that no part of their duties might be neglected. Frequently the food was scarce, sometimes very poor, but disciplined as they were in the school of sacrifice they never betrayed their privations or their sufferings.

The pressure of material needs and the increased demands made on their time and energy did not prevent them from undertaking the care of a school in Greytown, a little village a few miles distant from San Antonio. On a certain occasion Sister Mary of Jesus stopped at Greytown where she was kindly received by the Jesuit, Father F. Barragan, and his poor but pious people. Accustomed to devote his free time to the religious and secular instruction of the children the pastor, whose duties were numerous, was not satisfied with the results. He was unable to provide for the maintenance of a community, consequently, he had never sought to supply

[19] *Annals of the Congregation.*

his school with religious teachers. Father Barragan's difficulties were repeated to Reverend Mother St. Pierre by Sister Mary of Jesus, who so effectively pleaded the cause of her new-found friend that a teacher was promised on condition that the school fund allotted to this district would be raised. The State on application granted the money and Mother St. John, who was at the time a postulant, passed the county examinations; she was granted a certificate which authorized her to teach in the public schools of Texas.[20] There was at that period no clause in the law excluding religious and the religious garb from the public schools; the State did prohibit her, who was the certified teacher from imparting Christian Doctrine, but it did not interfere with the other members of the community; consequently, Reverend Mother St. Pierre was willing to take this means of teaching the truths of Faith to Catholic children who would otherwise have been deprived of religious instruction.

For the success of the cause Reverend Mother introduced the devotion of the Hours of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, a practice still observed at the Motherhouse. With the aid of a Jesuit from California she composed the offering and grouped the prayers that are recited hourly. The intentions are not identical with those which necessitated the practice in 1875; yet, in the simplicity and earnestness of the petitions, they set forth the needs of the Congregation and solicit of the Incarnate Word a special blessing for each Sister at that moment engaged in His work.

The community in Greytown consisted of Sister Joseph, Superioress, Sister St. Ange, and Miss Louise Ribe. Although their spiritual needs were well provided for, the same cannot be said of their material wants. To begin with, they had no proper dwelling. The sacristy, a room measuring ten by eighteen feet, served the purpose of dormitory, community room and refectory; the yard was the kitchen. The Sisters submitted to these inconveniences for some months before they secured a house in the village which

[20] *Annals of the Congregation.*

afforded them more room but hardly more comfort. Built of lumber the new dwelling had a number of openings in the roof which freely admitted rain and hail, while its wooden blinds when closed excluded all light. The water used for drinking purposes was brought from the river, a distance of a mile; fire-wood was gathered among the bushes, and bread was not obtainable. None of the Sisters knew how to make bread properly, but necessity and practice brought success.[21] Such was the simplicity of the first community of Our Lady of Guadalupe School; nevertheless, the Sisters knew that their acts of self-denial, cheerfulness, and sturdy patience were laying the foundation of the Society they were rearing for the glory of God and the good of humanity.

The school in Greytown continued until 1878, when on account of insufficient funds it was closed, and another was opened in Atascosa. The community of the latter consisted of Sister Joseph, Sister Gonzaga, and Sister Ignatius. The last-named Sister, a member of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Order of Brownsville, had been sent to San Antonio for her health. Grateful for the care given her she offered to teach in Atascosa until her services would be needed by her own Superior. This school, like that of Greytown, depended on the public school fund, and it too was closed after an existence of three years.

At the request of the Jesuit, Father Manci, Reverend Mother St. Pierre accepted St. Joseph's School, Cuero, to which she sent Sister Francis, Sister St. John, and Sister Mechtilde. This mission was no exception to those already opened as far as trials and difficulties were concerned. The Sisters were poorly lodged, their food was scanty, and there was open hostility to the Catholic religion. Prejudiced persons endeavored to prevent the people from patronizing the school, declaring that the teachers were incompetent. The successful examinations of the Sister teachers, however, helped to break down the opposition raised by the officials, and the school continued. It was to combat this idea of

[21] *Community Records.*

inefficiency that Bishop Pellicer strongly urged the Sisters to accept the position of teachers in the public schools. The year following the opening of St. Joseph's, Cuero, the Sisters went to Meyersville where they taught in the public school until 1892.[22]

The Community which was gradually establishing itself as a teaching and benevolent organization received requests for aid from various quarters of Texas. In 1878 Reverend Mother St. Pierre opened the first private school in Indianola, a seaside village. Every mark of success attended this foundation until 1882, when a disastrous tidal wave swept the coast. The Sisters did not return to the school the following September, escaping thereby the horrors of the storm which three years later completely destroyed Indianola.[23]

[22] *Community Records.*

[23] JOHNSON AND BARKER, *Texas and Texans*, p. 677. Chicago, 1914.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Reverend Mother St. Pierre.—Early Missions. 1872—1885.

Jeanne Pierrette Cinquin, Reverend Mother St. Pierre, was born in Beaujeu, in the Department of the Rhone, May 22, 1845.[1] Her parents, Pierre Cinquin and Claudine Biellard, who were wealthy and cultured, gave their three children the advantages of a thorough Christian education.

As a child Jeanne attended a school conducted by the Ursuline Nuns in Beaujeu where her ready intelligence, unselfish character, and amiable disposition made her a favorite of both teachers and companions. At fourteen her parents placed her as a boarder in the same academy. Perhaps even they did not suspect that their daughter's happy, care-free exterior concealed a serious, devout mind which early in childhood was attracted by the beauty of the religious life. On a certain occasion the distinguished Monseigneur Bataillon, Bishop of Oceanica, visited the academy and asked the pupils how many intended to become missionary Sisters. Immediately Jeanne arose but the Sister in charge motioned her to be seated. Walking slowly round the room and talking to each in turn, the Bishop finally reached Jeanne; placing his hand on the young girl's head and regarding her thoughtfully, he said, "Yes, my child, one day you will go to the missions and perhaps be a foundation stone."[2]

The happy, uneventful school days passed quickly and Jeanne reached her eighteenth year. A few days later her father received a notice from the government to the effect that his son Pierre was subject to the law of conscription, and that he should on a certain date report to the office for examination. The inquiry which

[1] *Community Register.*

[2] Many incidents were told the writer by Mother Alphonse, who was closely identified with Reverend Mother St. Pierre during the foundation days.

followed proved that his daughter's name had been inscribed on the city register as Pierre instead of Pierrette, and Monsieur Cinquin thought no more of the matter. To Jeanne, however, the incident proved significant and she announced her intention of devoting her life to the American missions.

No ordinary courage sufficed for such a vocation. The perils of a sea voyage, the periodic visitation of yellow fever, and her own ignorance of the English language were some of the obstacles which interested friends suggested, hoping thereby to weaken Jeanne's resolution; however, she rose above all natural feelings, and sought admission to the novitiate in Lyons as a candidate for the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

The young postulant soon won the friendship of Reverend Mother Angelique, a friendship which developed into ardent admiration on the part of the older religious and sincere affection on the part of the candidate. Time deepened this intimacy and for thirteen years the Superioress of the Monastery of Lyons was kept minutely informed concerning the growing Community in Texas.[3] Her wide experience and deep knowledge of the religious life were a guide and inspiration for the members of the new foundation who never ceased to regard her as their co-foundress.

The feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, 1868, was the date set for the investiture of the postulants destined for the Texas missions.[4] On that occasion five young ladies were clothed in the habit of a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word, among whom was Mademoiselle Cinquin, Sister St. Pierre of the Passion. Rarely has a patron saint been more aptly chosen, for in the designs of God the newly invested was to become a "rock" of support for the struggling community in its formative period as well as a means of reclaiming many to the true fold. Towards the close of the same year the missionaries set sail for Galveston;

[3] Many of the letters written to Reverend Mother Angelique and to Canon Galtier have been returned to the Congregation and are at present in the Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.

[4] *Community Records.*

three months later Sister St. Pierre was selected by Bishop Dubuis to assist Mother Madeleine with the foundation in San Antonio.

The quaint old Spanish town with its flat-roofed adobe houses, its narrow sidewalks, its maze of crooked streets, and its cosmopolitan population presented a curious yet picturesque sight to the young religious, who applied herself immediately to the study of the customs and language of her new home. Eagerly she awaited the rebuilding of the hospital, and as soon as Santa Rosa was completed she began her active life as a Sister of Charity.

"Her sympathetic attitude towards the sick imparted hope and cheer to many a discouraged heart and it was difficult to say which was the more admirable, her great charity for the afflicted and unfortunate or their profound respect and veneration for her. With a pleasure which was depicted on her countenance she rendered them the humblest services while her special attraction was for the poorest and most abandoned." [5]

Reverend Mother St. Pierre is described as having had a remarkable and pleasing personality; "slightly above the middle height, and of a dignified bearing, she was endowed with a natural grace and attractiveness to which a refined education added a special charm. Her distinctive features were her large dark eyes in whose expressive depths were mirrored frankness and sincerity. She was gifted with a penetrating glance which seemed to see into the very depths of souls, drawing them to nobler and higher things." [6]

When the separation between the Galveston and the San Antonio houses became effective, and a novice mistress was required for the training of the first three novices of the latter Community, Sister St. Pierre was intrusted with the office. Though but twenty-four years of age she was so remarkable for her splendid common sense and her understanding of human nature that it did not take the novices long to realize that the teachings of their mistress came from a heart filled with zeal for God's glory. One of Reverend Mother St. Pierre's novices, now an old religious,

[5] *Annals of the Congregation.*
[6] *Idem.*

thus expresses her recollections of her novitiate days: "Well do I remember how the words of our Mother sank into our hearts and made us feel how little our sacrifices resembled those of the Master. In striving to animate our zeal for perfection Mother St. Pierre often exclaimed: 'O my children, He whom you serve is the same God whom the Saints loved and served so faithfully. What more has He done for them than for you?' Once on entering the novitiate, when the novices were saying the ejaculation, 'Incarnate Word, I adore Thee and I love Thee with all my heart,' she took occasion to impress on us the meaning of the prayer we had just said. 'No, you do not love the Incarnate Word with all your heart when you are ungenerous in His service. Only those who give all can with truth say, I love Thee with all my heart.' To a novice who complained of her sufferings and expressed doubts concerning her perseverance, Mother St. Pierre replied: 'My child, your sufferings are but trifles; you have never had a great cross; that is why your little crosses seem so heavy. Be generous with God and He will be generous with you.'"[7]

In justice to the novices of those days it must be confessed that their trials were many and difficult; but in her training Mother St. Pierre sought to animate them with a truly religious spirit, with zeal for their personal sanctification, and with such love for the Incarnate Word that no sacrifice would be too great when performed for His sake. She herself was a model of zeal, self-sacrifice, and humility, to which was added such affection for each of the novices that she won their love and admiration as well as their respect and confidence.

In the spring of 1872 Reverend Mother Madeleine's term of office came to a close and at her suggestion Mother St. Pierre was appointed Superioress.[8] From that date until her death in 1891 she continued, uninterruptedly, in office, having been re-elected at the expiration of each term. Revered and loved as she was

[7] *Recollections of* Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart.
[8] *Annals of the Congregation.*

by all, even by those not of her faith, her influence for good was far-reaching. A non-Catholic doctor of St. Louis once spoke of her as "that masterful and saintly woman, Mother St. Pierre."[9]

Shortly after her appointment the new Superioress turned her attention to the construction of a special building for the orphans; in 1874 the two institutions began separate careers. In spite of her efforts to make the children comfortable in their new quarters on Military Plaza, Reverend Mother St. Pierre was not satisfied. Situated in the heart of the city, the Orphanage afforded few facilities for fresh air and recreation. To remedy this difficulty she had the children brought to the lawn in front of Santa Rosa at least three times a week and games provided for their amusement. Every Saturday during the month of May she was instrumental in having Mass offered in the old Immaculate Conception Mission which the orphans, with as many Sisters as could be spared, attended. Mother St. Pierre delighted in accompanying these pious excursions, and nothing gave her more pleasure than to afford the children this opportunity of spending a morning in the woods.

Mentioning the old Conception Mission recalls an incident told by Reverend Mother Mary John. Convinced that missionaries endowed with special qualities of endurance and self-sacrifice were needed in San Antonio, Mother St. Pierre who entertained great admiration for the work accomplished by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, prayed that the future would see them established in the city. If our Blessed Mother answered her prayer, she promised to place a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes in the Conception Mission as a thanks-offering. In 1885 the Oblate Fathers came to San Antonio, where they were intrusted with the care of St. Mary's Church. The statue of Our Lady occupies a prominent place in the chapel of the mission today although perhaps few know why.

After the transfer of Santa Rosa to Houston Street the de-

[9] Doctor Outten, chief surgeon of the Missouri Pacific Hospital.

mands made on the Community increased. There were times when the future looked dark and discouraging, when the altruism and confidence of the Superioress were sorely tried. "Our patients are very few," she wrote to Reverend Mother Angelique, "but never shall we abandon this work so dear to our hearts."[10] "In order to economize the Sisters are wearing black calico dresses and keeping their serge habits for special occasions, but as long as Santa Rosa is able to continue its mission of charity, no sacrifice is too great."[11]

The devotion and labors of the Sisters gradually merited the appreciation of the physicians of the city who gave to the hospital their patronage. Doctors Cupples, Ferdinand Herff, Senior, and Amos Graves, Senior, were already enjoying prominence in medical circles, and San Antonio is justly proud of their reputation. Educated and trained in the leading universities of Europe and America, they gave their talents and services to the frontier town at a time when there was little to receive in return. Doctor Cupples had been Staff Assistant-Surgeon to the British Legion in Spain in 1836, and having had occasion to meet Henry de Castro, who was actively engaged in settling a number of Alsatian families in Texas, he was induced to migrate to Castroville. In 1855 he moved to San Antonio where he established his home, and until his death identified himself with every civic interest.

Doctor Ferdinand Herff came from Germany in 1850. The same announcement which informed the public of the opening of Santa Rosa stated that charity patients who had not their own physician, would be attended by the hospital physician, Doctor Herff.[12] For forty-three years "Old Doctor Herff," as he is affectionately called by the Sisters, was identified with the institution and was a valued friend and adviser. Reverend Mother St. Pierre frequently amused the Sisters by relating the results of her attempts to speak English and the care he took to have

[10] A copy of this letter is in the *Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.*
[11] Letter dated December 15, 1885.
[12] *San Antonio Daily Herald,* November 18, 1869.

her pronounce every word correctly. Equally keen for the advancement of the Sisters in their profession, he helped to organize classes and for years was a lecturer and prominent member of the medical staff at the hospital.

What has been said of Doctors Cupples and Herff may be said of Doctor Amos Graves, who, though a young man when Santa Rosa was established, became a skilled physician and an invaluable friend. These doctors were all non-Catholics, but they esteemed the Sisters highly and gave their services towards organizing and systematizing the institution.[13]

The devotion of Reverend Mother St. Pierre to the benevolent works of the Community was equaled by her interest in the schools. In a former chapter it was stated that Bishop Pellicer requested the Sisters to engage in the educational work of the diocese. Teachers in arts and sciences were engaged and the Sisters were accorded advantages which enabled them to become proficient in their work. Careful study and class preparation were required, and all were encouraged to secure state certificates. Reverend Mother St. Pierre's sense of justice and duty was too strict to allow any negligence; a normal school was conducted during the summer at Santa Rosa, and though every Sister was kept busy throughout the scholastic term, many who were stationed in neighboring missions came to San Antonio every Saturday to take part in the classes.

Before 1880 all schools conducted by the Community belonged to the State and were supported by state appropriations. Texas has made generous efforts towards providing educational facilities for her people and large sums of money were voted for this purpose. Unfortunately, however, because the school districts did not always cooperate with the legislature the results were neglected buildings, small salaries, and an insignificant enrollment. Such was the case with the schools at Greytown, Atascosa, Cuero, Mar-

[13] Doctor Amos Graves was baptized on his death bed. He died March, 1912.

tinez, and Meyersville.[14] In the fall of 1878, nevertheless, the Congregation arranged for the opening of St. Joseph's School, Seguin, the history of which has been continuous as well as noteworthy.

The building, a large substantial stone structure, was erected by the Jesuits in 1876. The revolution in Mexico having driven the Fathers from Saltillo, they sought refuge in San Antonio, where they were welcomed by Bishop Pellicer. It was Mother St. Pierre's privilege and happiness to perform many acts of kindness for the exiles, not the least of which was the furnishing of their house with the Sisters' own beds while the community of Santa Rosa, herself included, slept on the floor.

After a short stay in San Antonio the Jesuits were requested by the Bishop to take charge of the newly erected parish of St. James, Seguin, where they built a rectory and college. The population of Seguin was not sufficient to support the latter institution and the Fathers sold the residence to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.[15] Even after disposing of the building they continued their care of the parish and the surrounding missions until conditions in Mexico permitted them to return to Saltillo. The loss of the Jesuits was deeply regretted, especially by the Sisters, but their memory lived on; and frequent mention is made of Father Maas, Father Morandi, and Father Garesché, all of whom assisted in furthering the works of the Congregation.

The first community of St. Joseph's consisted of Sister Francis, Superioress, Sister Stanislaus, and Sister Gabriel. This was the beginning of that long and active career of Sister Gabriel, who, as Inspectress of Schools, was one of the greatest factors in organizing the educational activities of the Congregation. Born in New Orleans, she was educated by the Dominican Sisters of that city, and entered the Congregation in San Antonio at an early age.

[14] Cf. Burlinson's *Letter to Governor Roberts*, April 29, 1879, cited by Eby, *Education in Texas*, p. 981. Austin, 1912; also Cooper, *Some Defects in the School System*, cited by Eby, *op. cit.*, p. 832.

[15] *Community Annals.*

Her abilities were devoted unsparingly to the service of God as a teacher, as Superioress of one of the missions, as Consulter, as Secretary of the Congregation and as Inspectress of Schools. To her the Community is indebted for the establishment of the normal school, and for much of the early enthusiasm of the teachers for study and advancement. The greatest care was given to the training of the young Sisters, towards whom she was always kind but firm. Her deep reverence for childhod led her to inculcate in the minds of her co-laborers a similar sentiment. Schools for poor children were the object of her special solicitude, and nothing gave her greater pleasure than to note in the teachers a devotion to this particular branch of charity. Her frequent election to the office of consulter was a proof of the appreciation the Sisters entertained for her great and lovable qualities.

When assigned to the school in Seguin Sister Gabriel's first duty was to prepare a course of studies, which, once inaugurated in St. Joseph's became the standard for the other schools of the Congregation. The grading of the elementary classes conformed to the general system of the United States; the classes of secondary instruction comprised a three, later a four years' course in which the study of Latin or a modern language was made compulsory. Methods of teaching music received her earnest attention, and the demand for art teachers who were studying under Professor Onderdonk indicated the development of an artistic taste among the students.

Assisting Sister Gabriel was Sister Stanislaus, a native of Alabama and a staunch Southerner, whose experience during Civil War days, coupled with her wide knowledge of history, enabled her to introduce into her classes a vitality which was matched by interest and enthusiasm on the part of her pupils. Gentle and kind, she won the love and loyalty of all.

Under the guidance of its devoted teachers St. Joseph's prospered. The Catholic population was not large, but the school records include the names of many of the most prominent Prottestant families of the city. In 1915 the introduction of a large

foreign element necessitated the erection of a new building, a task which was undertaken by the parish. The original St. Joseph's School was then used exclusively for the Mexican children.

This gradual increase in the number of houses required a corresponding addition to the ranks of the Sisters; and, as vocations to the religious life were few in the South, Reverend Mother St. Pierre decided in 1878 to visit Europe. Through the assistance of interested friends ten young ladies volunteered for the Texas missions, among whom were Mother Ignatius and Mother Alphonse—both destined to occupy important positions in the future history of the Congregation.

The home-coming of Reverend Mother St. Pierre was an occasion for joy but scarcely had the greetings of welcome been exchanged when the Community endured a severe loss in the death of Bishop Pellicer, who for six years had directed the affairs of a diocese which taxed his strength beyond the point of endurance. Forgetful of self, he had put his whole heart into his work and his constitution had been undermined by his missionary labors. Through his personal influence and exertions the educational system of Texas had been improved and broadened; and, though his episcopal rule was brief, his kind sympathy and disinterested friendship have made his memory blessed. Bishop Pellicer died at St. Mary's rectory, April 14, 1880, and was laid to rest before the high altar of San Fernando's Cathedral.[16]

Although the Community lost a faithful friend it found another in Bishop J. C. Neraz, who was consecrated in San Antonio, May 8, 1881.[17] Born at Anse in the Department of the Rhone, France, January 12, 1828, John C. Neraz came to Texas at the age of twenty-four, was ordained in 1853 and was assigned to the mission of Nacogdoches. His twenty years of ceaseless labor in the various sections of the State acquainted him with the country and the people, and his apostolic devotion won for him the rever-

[16] Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 411.
[17] Parisot-Smith, *History of the San Antonio Diocese*, p. 79.

ence and love of his parishioners. As vicar-general of the diocese and spiritual director of the Community, Father Neraz knew the Sisters well and earnestly strove to enable them to extend their missionary endeavors. Acting on his advice, Reverend Mother St. Pierre applied for civil authorization under the laws of Texas, and on July 15, 1881, the charter of the Congregation was signed by the Secretary of State.[18]

Secured thus both canonically and civilly, the Community continued its slow but steady growth. The dearth of members manifesting itself again, Reverend Mother St. Pierre felt strongly impelled to seek help in Ireland. Her desire was encouraged by Bishop Neraz who urged her to make preparations for an immediate departure; however, the financial condition of the Community was alarming, the results of the voyage were doubtful, and the Sisters were inclined to oppose the project. Confidence in the Foster-father of the Incarnate Word was one of Reverend Mother St. Pierre's strongest devotions and she redoubled her prayers for light and assistance. As if in immediate answer to her petition friends offered to defray all the expenses incurred.

After visiting France and Germany and accepting four candidates who applied for admission to the Congregation, Reverend Mother set sail for Ireland. There her mission was not without difficulties and drawbacks for priests and other well meaning persons sought to discourage the applicants by representing to them the hardships of mission life; by asserting that the Sisters in America resembled peasants who followed the plow rather than souls devoted to prayer.[19]

But perseverance triumphed; and Reverend Mother returned to Texas with fifteen Irish candidates, the first of many who since then have offered their life and talents to the works of the Congregation. "Our arrival occasioned great rejoicing in the community," wrote Mother Colette; "after a visit to our Lord we

[18] *Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.*

[19] *Recollections of* Mother Colette, a member of the first band from Ireland.

were taken to the assembly room where we met Bishop Neraz. The following morning each one was given some occupation and all were happy to be among the Sisters of St. Joseph's Orphanage. In the course of time some were assigned the duty of caring for the sick; though we were inexperienced nurses, we endeavored to render ourselves useful to the Sisters who were overworked. Reverend Mother St. Pierre herself came to our assistance and taught us clinic work, her very example teaching us to see in the suffering and afflicted our dear Lord Himself." [20]

The broad charity of Reverend Mother St. Pierre impressed upon these young Sisters the necessity of devoting the best of their abilities to the poor and the out-cast, "for," as she frequently said, "this is the truest way to attract God's blessing on the Congregation." [21]

To one who makes a study of the early foundations and notes how eagerly Reverend Mother St. Pierre selected the poorest and least promising fields for the activities of her Community, these words seem characteristic. The records of 1881 recount the opening of schools in Panna Maria, Cestohowa, and St. Hedwig, three small localities within a radius of fifty miles from San Antonio. No honors or notable achievements were promised the daughters of the Incarnate Word, only an abundance of incessant labors and self-sacrifice, but their Superioress willingly accepted the schools for the sake of the souls that would be benefited.

Sister Francis, with a community of three Sisters, took charge of St. Joseph's School in Panna Maria, a settlement whose parishioners claim to be the oldest Polish colonists in the United States. The school was opened in midwinter, the weather was intensely cold, and the journey had to be made in the familiar 'prairie schooner.' But a hearty welcome was accorded the Sisters by the pastor, Father Lisciki, who, to show his appreciation, had the church bell rung and the parishioners summoned to share in the greeting. The kindly disposed people endeavored to make Sister

[20] *Idem.*

[21] *Idem.*

Francis and her companions comfortable in their new home and St. Joseph's began its quiet but steady career. The house which served the purpose of school and convent had been built of stones brought from the neighboring creek and dated its origin to the year 1868.[22] For a number of years after the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word went to Panna Maria, St. Joseph's was conducted as a public school and the teachers received their salary from the State; in 1903, however, the parish assumed the responsibility and the school has since been parochial.

St. Hedwig and Cestohowa received teachers the same year. Sister St. John opened the school in the former, while Sister Joseph founded St. Joseph's, Cestohowa. Irregular attendance was a serious drawback to the latter, especially during the rainy season when the river, which divided the town, overflowed its banks and made fording impossible. To remedy conditions it was thought advisable to divide the allotment and establish a school at Bartola; as the funds were found insufficient to support both communities, St. Joseph's, Cestohowa, became a private school.

When Bandera and Eagle Pass applied for teachers in 1882, Sister Dominic with two Sisters was sent to the former and Sister Agnes conducted her community of five Sisters to the latter. The journey to Bandera had to be made in wagons as no railroads connected San Antonio with this little mountain district. Father Felix, the pastor, came in his buggy to conduct the Sisters to their mission, bringing two large vehicles into one of which the bedding and furniture were packed while the community occupied the other.

The road lay through one of the most picturesque sections of Texas; instead of the bleak prairies, which are wearisome to travelers, there are hills and valleys, fields of corn and cotton with here and there groves of pecan and oak. Driving along this, the Old San Antonio Trail, the happy community gave a name

[22] *Community Records.*

of some favorite saint to each hill as it came in sight. "When night overtook us we camped in a valley where, in spite of our remonstrances, Father made the fire, and, aided by the drivers, prepared supper. Breakfast was served by the same willing hands. We had just recommenced our journey when a sudden change came in the weather; the rain began to fall so heavily that the road was converted into a respectable river. Slowly we plodded along until it became evident that the horses could no longer draw the furniture wagon, and it was left by the side of the road. Only a mile or so was covered when it became impossible to move the second vehicle now buried to the hubs in the mud; it, too, was abandoned. As a last resort we exchanged the wagon for Father's buggy and continued thus until the torrents of rain compelled us to stop at a very small and poor-looking house. In answer to Father's request for hospitality the people, not without apprehension of their unknown and strange looking guests, silently consented. They seemed to be afraid of us and managed to keep out of sight. However, we were grateful for the shelter and were wondering what we should do for supper since we had forgotten to provide ourselves with something to eat when we abandoned the wagons. Fortunately, Father had some meat in his buggy; this he brought and one of us summoned enough courage to ask for a frying pan. In response to the request a woman stood in the doorway and at arm's length handed Sister the pan. While we were eating our one-course supper some one inquired if we wanted biscuits; although we appreciated the good will of our hostess, we declined the offer and did justice to the meat which was intended for Saturday's dinner and not for Friday's supper. In spite of our strange surroundings we slept until Father called us at day-break and said he was ready to start. Towards noon we reached Bandera after a three days trip."[23]

Beginnings in Eagle Pass near the borders of Mexico were not

[23] *Recollections of* SISTER STANISLAUS. *Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.*

more promising than were those in Bandera. Classes were conducted in an old house which was totally bereft of all conveniences for school purposes. Boards placed on boxes were used for benches; these were carried to the church every Friday afternoon and brought back by the pupils on Monday morning. As the number of children increased, the Community undertook the construction of the present St. Joseph's School. The following is a copy of the document written by Reverend Mother St. Pierre and placed in the corner stone, which was blessed on the feast of St. Basil, June 14, 1883.

"In consideration of the necessity of having a school in Eagle Pass, we, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of the diocese of San Antonio, have determined to build a house here under the patronage of St. Joseph, Foster-Father of the Incarnate Word. Having obtained the consent of the Ordinary of the Diocese, Right Reverend J. C. Neraz, who gave us the plan of construction, and with entire confidence in the Divine help which never fails us; with faith in the protection of our Father St. Joseph whose name we have chosen for the new building, the work was begun. The land on which the Convent is erected, is a gift of Mr. John Twohig whom we recommend to the prayers and good works of the Sisters. . . . The Community, already in debt, can contribute nothing towards the erection of the building but with the help of Divine Providence we have received the following:

(a) The loan of three thousand dollars without interest for two years;
(b) The loan of two thousand dollars at six per cent interest for one year.
(c) A donation of one hundred dollars from Colonel Pierce of Eagle Pass, President of the railroad;
(d) Collections to the amount of four hundred dollars by the Sisters of Eagle Pass;

in all, the amount of five thousand five hundred dollars for the building, the cost of which is estimated at seven thousand dollars. . . . So we leave to you, dear Sisters, who shall come after us, a full statement of God's assistance in the work which we commenced, not with our own funds, but with borrowed money. Our hearts are filled with gratitude for having the means of building a school for the children of this place; and those of our dear Sisters who will have charge of them will aim at procuring the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, through their good example, through education based on faith as authorized by the Church, and required by the exigencies of the time." [24]

[24] *Archives at the Motherhouse*, San Antonio.

St. Joseph's School realized all the expectations of its founders and soon was classified with the academies of the Congregation. As the population of the city increased during the late years, Our Lady of Guadalupe School has been erected, the enrollment of which reaches two hundred yearly.

While occupied with the western missions Reverend Mother St. Pierre received a personal visit from Bishop Gallagher who requested her to take charge of the Galveston Orphanage. The matter was a delicate one and occasioned much reflection. Since its foundation St. Mary's Orphanage had been cared for by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of Galveston, the personnel of which community was not sufficiently numerous to meet the demands made upon its resources. With Bishop Gallagher there was but one alternative: confide the Orphanage to the care of Reverend Mother St. Pierre's Sisters or let it pass out of the hands of those who founded it. Actuated solely by the motive of contributing to God's glory and the honor of His Name, Reverend Mother gave the Bishop an affirmative answer.

Bishop Neraz, aware of the petition, had departed for Europe before hearing the decision; nevertheless, as soon as information reached him he wrote to Reverend Mother St. Pierre:

"What God does is well done; and now I wish to encourage you and ask you to thank God Who makes use of you and your community as His instruments in this work. . . . Recommend me to the prayers of your spiritual daughters, and tell them in my name, to act always as true religious, and to obey their Bishop in all things. Let them be kind to the orphans, and endeavor to conform them to piety. I rely on the good spirit which reigns in the community, and I hope that nothing can change it. Let each Sister thoroughly understand her duty and fulfill it with fidelity and God will undoubtedly bless and protect her." [25]

Arriving in Rome the Bishop sent this note:

"You can imagine my happiness when I tell you I am in Rome. I was very happy to see Bishop Dubuis. He said our acceptance of the orphanage gave him new life." [26]

[25] *A copy of this letter is in the Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.*
[26] *Ibid.*

For five years the community of eight Sisters which was sent to Galveston cared for St. Mary's and continued the public school system inaugurated previously to their arrival. The nearness of the bay often caused alarm and there are frequent references in early correspondence to floods which completely isolated the Orphanage from the mainland. Nevertheless, the Sisters remained in charge until 1888, when Reverend Mother St. Pierre requested Bishop Gallagher to dispense with the services of the San Antonio community. As the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of Galveston were in a position to assume the responsibility of the institution he consented.

The activities of the Community had thus far centered around San Antonio. In 1883 a request came from the Fathers of the Resurrection to open a school in Chicago. With the consent of Bishop Neraz Sisters were sent to the new field and so large was the enrollment during the first year that a second school was opened in 1884. Promising as the work was, however, Mother St. Pierre felt obliged to withdraw the Sisters because she was unwilling to comply with the demand to establish in Chicago a novitiate exclusively for Polish postulants. The two institutions were closed in 1884, and the Sisters returned to the South.

At the invitation of the Oblate Father, Reverend R. M. Olivier, seconded by that of the county judge, a community was sent to Rio Grande City, Texas, a locality whose population was mostly Catholic. Within a short time a special building was erected for the boys and the two schools effected an amount of good. However, as the citizens of Rio Grande City increased in numbers, objections were made to the teachers' wearing the religious habit in the classroom. Since the parishioners were unable to support their own school, Reverend Mother St. Pierre permitted the teachers to withdraw from the public school and establish one on their own responsibility. This they maintained until 1888, when financial conditions obliged them to return to the Motherhouse.

In the document recording the erection of St. Joseph's School,

Eagle Pass, Reverend Mother St. Pierre stated that the Community was in debt, consequently, it was unable to construct the building alone. This reference is no doubt to the expenses incurred in the enlargement of Santa Rosa. The population of San Antonio having rapidly increased the original hospital building could not meet the additional demands for accommodation. A three-storied structure was therefore erected which provided the institution with operating rooms, general wards, and a number of private apartments.

The erection and equipping of this addition taxed the community treasury to its utmost, nevertheless, positive that the need justified the expense, the Sisters were confident that Providence would enable them to meet their obligations. San Antonio had, it is true, a City Hospital; but as few conveniences were afforded the sick, frequent demands were made on the charity of Santa Rosa. Previous to 1883 the city officials having made no provision for patients suffering from contagious diseases, Reverend Mother St. Pierre converted some houses at the rear of the hospital into an infirmary which served the purpose of a "pest house." The care of these patients she reserved to herself and was seldom happier than when devoting her attention to the most needy.

The smallpox epidemic in 1883 obliged the city to assume its own responsibility, yet, as the following letter shows, the Sisters were ready to extend their sympathy and assistance:

"Smallpox has broken out in our city. . . . As the Americans are more afraid of this disease than they are of death the authorities are endeavoring to hide conditions from the people. After a long search the officials could secure no better accommodation for the sick than a cabin on the outskirts of the city. With its roof partly torn away, and its floor the bare ground, it was a pitiful refuge, but to it the patients were conveyed. The doctors asked me if our Sisters would be willing to nurse the smallpox cases which of course meant that they would not be able to leave the precincts until the epidemic abated. This condition made the proposition almost unacceptable. 'I cannot oblige the Sisters to deprive themselves of the Sacraments but if they are willing to make the sacrifice you may have them,' was my answer, and calling Sister Alphonse and Sister St. Clair who had had smallpox, I told them of the

doctor's request. It was as I expected—the two Sisters made preparations for an immediate departure, but in order to avoid commotion in the city it was suggested that they leave after nightfall. At ten o'clock that same evening Sister M. Madeleine came in the Bishop's carriage in which we placed bedding and infirmary utensils; the two Sisters occupied a second carriage, and, accompanied by a mounted policeman the poor children departed. As no provision had been made for their convenience I secured a tent from the government. Beneath it they could rest after the watches of the night, and there, too, with the aid of an oil stove they prepared the food for the sick. It is heart-rending to know that during this, the coldest winter on record, those poor children have no protection other than a miserable tent.

"No one visits them except the doctor, the priest, and Monseigneur (Neraz); the latter goes frequently and visits the sick. The Sisters are happy and contented and thank God for the conversions He has permitted them to effect." [27]

Though forbidden to enter the cabin, Reverend Mother St. Pierre drove to the camp every day during the five weeks the epidemic lasted and brought the Sisters food and clothing. Gladly would she have remained to aid the nurses, but as Bishop Neraz objected she submitted to his opinion.

In all these undertakings the Community received the cooperation of the Bishop and several letters still extant show how earnestly he endeavored to secure subjects so that its sphere of influence might widen. Writing while en route to Rome in 1883, he says:

"I wrote to the priest who knows Sister André and accepted the postulants he recommended. Another priest who is ready to leave for Texas came to see me and I requested him not to leave until I could go to Ireland for your postulants. I am in hopes that he can accede to my request. I received a letter from Sister Bernard of Cahir, which I answered telling her to keep all the subjects she has secured and I shall soon see her. It will take me two or three weeks to see all the persons I promised to visit and although I know that my aunt and other immediate relatives will not be pleased with so long an absence I shall risk their displeasure in the interests of my diocese. Next Monday I shall go to Lyons and speak to the students of the Grand Seminary in the interests of our Texas missions. Let us always put out trust in God

[27] The original French copy of this letter is in the *Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.*

and we shall not be disappointed. Blessings to all the Sisters, novices, and orphan children, begging a remembrance in your prayers, I remain,

JOHN C. NERAZ,
Bishop of San Antonio." [28]

Another letter written a short time later shows that he was equally solicitous for the spiritual growth of the Community:

"I was about to answer your letter of the 18th, which I received on my return from Rome, when letters from three of the Sisters were received. These I answered at once as otherwise I might not have time to do so before I leave for Ireland. I wrote to the nun at Knock—Sister Mary Francis Clare. If I can succeed in sending you ten or fifteen Irish candidates, I shall consider myself fortunate. I shall take with me the French candidates from Cotes du Nord, and the four German candidates who were recommended by Abbé Welters and Abbé Arnold.

"You will soon have your spiritual daughters around you; and when this letter reaches you the time of retreat will be near. As the community is increasing it is very important that it should be placed on a secure footing; and for this end the greatest importance should be attached to the observance of the Rule. Be firm without being severe. Let your head not your heart lead you. Be kind to everyone but relax in nothing. . . . . Before deciding where to send the Sisters reflect in the presence of God, and consult with the members of your Council. This being once decided, send the Sisters to their allotted missions and permit them to remain there the entire year, as too much traveling and frequent removals are prejudicial to the work. Wherever a Sister may be sent let her stay there at least until the end of the year; thus will you help to preserve the religious spirit and strengthen each Sister in her vocation.

"I am often wandering in thought in San Antonio. . . . On my return from Ireland I expect to find news awaiting me. Good-bye.

Votre vieux père qui vous benit,

JOHANNES C. NERAZ,
Bp. of San Antonio." [29]

Ten days later the Bishop was in Ireland.

"Dear Mother: I arrived here yesterday, and Mother Mary Francis received me kindly. In about two weeks, seven postulants will leave for

[28] *Archives at Motherhouse, San Antonio.*
[29] *Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.*

San Antonio via Galveston. They are well educated. Six of them are for teaching, and one for hospital work.

"My blessing to all the Sisters, I am with them often in thought.

Good-bye and God bless you.

JOHN C. NERAZ." [80]

Under the wise guidance of Bishop Neraz the Community continued to develop. As ecclesiastical Superior, confessor, and spiritual guide, he left the impress of his zeal and devotion on many pages of the early records. His manifold occupations and frequent travels having obliged him to relinquish the office of confessor, the files of 1883 contain a letter which announces as his successor, Father F. Feith of the Society of Mary. It is opportune to mention here that Father proved himself worthy of the Bishop's confidence and trust; when a few years later he was sent to Japan for missionary work, the Sisters felt they had lost a faithful friend and guide. His interest in the advancement of the Congregation lived on in his successors, the Fathers of the same Society, who have been confessors of the community at the Motherhouse. Although the customary weekly conferences have been invaluable aids in the spiritual life, they form only a part of the services rendered by Fathers Spenner, Weckesser, Eichner, Schratz, Frische, Canning, Ei, and Tragesser. While the courtesy of these religious makes them welcome at all times their keen interest in every move made by the Congregation, and the readiness with which they proffer the results of their experiences in the business world, have been of inestimable value to the Sisters.

The year 1884 brought with it the triennial elections of the officers and closed what may be called the first phase of the Community's history. Reverend Mother St. Pierre was re-elected; Mother Madeleine received the offices of Assistant and Treasurer; Sister Ignatius, Mistress of Novices; and Sister Gabriel, Secretary. The Consulters were Sister Francis, Sister Anthony, Sister Gonzaga, and Sister Ange.

[80] *Ibid.*

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word had now spent fifteen years in San Antonio. They were not many, but their eleven schools, two orphanages and one hospital were proving that the purpose of their Community was needful and practical. The Constitutions, too, which had gone through the crucial test of actual observance, were now ready for the final drafting. Encouraged by the reports which Bishop Neraz brought to Lyons, Bishop Dubuis requested the religious of the monastery to redraft the existing code, authorizing them at the same time to make the changes which increased membership and new works demanded. The edition, printed in Lyons in 1884, was later translated into English by Reverend F. P. Garesché, a Jesuit from Ohio. With the exception of some slight modifications the text is the same as used by the Congregation today.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Foundations in Missouri, Mexico, Kansas.—Death of Reverend Mother St. Pierre.

1885—1891.

In the early part of 1885 the Community was requested to take charge of the Missouri Pacific Railroad Hospital, in Fort Worth, Texas. Reverend Mother St. Pierre did not favor the proposition immediately, since the administration of the institution was to remain under secular control, nevertheless, knowing that the railroad company employed numerous immigrants, many of whom were fallen away Catholics, she was confident that the influence of the Sister nurses would be productive of incalculable good. Moreover, Bishop Gallagher, in whose diocese the institution was located, urged her to accept the offer. In February Reverend Mother, accompanied by Sister Gabriel, visited the hospital where she was courteously received by Doctor Outten, the chief surgeon of the road. Although he was eager to have the Community assume charge at once, it was some weeks before Sister Assumption and her nine companions were ready to leave San Antonio for the new mission.

The hospital, a large frame building, ideally situated on an elevated plain and surrounded by extensive grounds, afforded ample facilities for fresh air and light, but few conveniences for efficient nursing. The Sisters' apartments, too, were poorly equipped. There was a temporary chapel where the Holy Sacrifice was offered once or twice a week; on the other days Mass was heard in St. Patrick's Church. While quietly enduring these inconveniences the Sisters sought to make their patients as comfortable as cramped conditions would permit.

On April 5, the same year, a fire of unknown origin broke out in the hospital. The Sisters, their number reduced by the absence of those who had gone to Mass, worked with such promptness

and presence of mind that every patient was carried to a place of safety before help arrived.

During the ensuing hours of the day the patients who were able to travel were sent to their homes, the rest were removed to the Texas-Pacific Hospital, Marshall, Texas, then in charge of the nursing Sisters of Mary. A temporary infirmary was placed in charge of the community while the company without loss of time, began the rebuilding of the hospital. When completed the Sisters resumed their duties and continued in charge until 1889, when they purchased the property from the owners.

Reverend Mother St. Pierre and Mother Madeleine arrived in Fort Worth on April 23, and took possession of the hospital. Doctor Volker, representing the company, made the transfer and gave the Sisters valuable information concerning the business administration of the institution. The following day Mass was offered in the new St. Joseph's Infirmary, which was dedicated by Bishop Neraz, May 12.[1]

Scarcely had the building changed owners when arrangements were made for the care of the patients of the Denver and Colorado, the International and Great Northern, and the Santa Fe Railroad Companies; at the same time the mayor of Fort Worth requested the Sisters to receive the city's poor. The first entry made on the new books for April 29, was the name of a charity patient, after which date the record shows almost daily admissions. During the first year St. Joseph's received four hundred and fifty-six patients; in 1922 the number cared for was one thousand six hundred and twenty-four.[2]

When Fort Worth was included in the newly erected diocese of Dallas, in 1890, the first Bishop of the See, Right Reverend T. E. Brennan, became a sincere friend of the community. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered in the hospital chapel every

[1] *Community Records.*

[2] Report sent to the American College of Surgeons for the year 1922. A copy of this report is in the Archives at St. Joseph's Infirmary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Sunday and twice during the week, the Bishop frequently acting as celebrant.

So great was the demand for accommodations that in less than ten years the Superiors of the Community were obliged to erect a new brick building, the cornerstone of which was blessed by Reverend J. M. Guyot, pastor of St. Patrick's Church and chaplain of the Infirmary. In 1905 the construction of an annex furnished St. Joseph's with one hundred large and airy rooms. At present the hospital has its own training-school for nurses and ranks with Santa Rosa as a first-class, standardized institution. Like the pioneer, Santa Rosa, much of its progress is due to the devotion and interest of the early staff of doctors, among whom may be mentioned Doctors W. A. Adams, chief surgeon of the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad Company, W. A. Duringer, Burts, Fields, Anderson, West, Thompson, and Bacon Saunders.

Another railroad hospital accepted in 1885 was that of the Texas-Pacific Company, in Marshall, Texas. Here, too, accommodations were few; Sister Alphonse and her eight Sisters denied themselves many of the necessaries of life in order to bring souls to a knowledge of God and to the practice of their duties.

The Annals of 1885 record the first foundation made in Mexico. This was in Saltillo, at the request of Right Reverend Montes de Oca. The opening of this house was due primarily to the Jesuit, Father Maas, who formerly had been in charge of St. James' parish, Seguin. Upon leaving Texas, Father Maas was appointed Superior of St. John's College, Saltillo, where he and the Bishop became close friends. When the question of establishing Colegio La Purisima arose, Father Maas suggested asking the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word to assume charge of the institution, but the Bishop, who was unacquainted with the Community, hesitated. Assured that the Sisters mentioned would be able to cope with the difficulties, Bishop Montes de Oca invited them to Colegio La Purisima.

Leaving San Antonio early in December Reverend Mother and two Sisters traveled from Laredo to Ramos Arispa, where they

were met by Father Maas and Father de la Garza, the parish priest of Saltillo, who accompanied them to the Convent; there they were greeted by the rector of the Jesuit College. During the interval between their arrival and the opening of the school, the Sisters were visited by the ladies of the Catholic Society, the Children of Mary, and the members of the Society of the Sacred Heart. A short time later Bishop Montes de Oca sent his greetings and manifested the deep interest he had in the organization of the school.

Colegio La Purisima proved an educational factor in the life of Saltillo. The program of studies corresponded with that followed by the schools in the United States and the classes were attended by the children of the wealthiest and most influential families of the city. The "Laws of Reform," by forbidding the Sisters to wear the habit or to engage in teaching by virtue of their position as religious, placed obstacles in the way; however, through the influence of friends the community received the government's recognition as teachers, and acting on the advice of the Bishop and other supporters of Catholic education, consented to appear in secular dress. Their costume, similar to that worn by the postulants today, consisted of a plain black dress, a cap, and a cape for indoors; when obliged to go abroad they added a large black tapalo or shawl in accordance with the custom observed by the ladies of Mexico. Only on special occasions as, for instance, during Midnight Mass on Christmas, did they venture to wear the religious garb in the convent.[3]

As the community became known its system of education gained favor with the civil authorities, who yearly appointed a committee of three to conduct the public examinations of the pupils. The governor of the state usually presided at the commencement exercises and distributed the diplomas and premiums. By degrees and without opposition the Sisters resumed the habit, wearing it in the classrooms but never in the streets. The work thus begun

[3] *Diary of Colegio La Purisima.*

in the midst of hostilities on the part of the government, succeeded in obtaining a foothold which not even the Revolution of 1913 disturbed. The Academy, or Colegio as it is more familiarly called, has continued to prosper and the school opened later for poor children enrolls at least two hundred yearly.

Only one addition was made to the list of institutions in 1886. At the invitation of the authorities of the International and Great Northern Railroad Company Reverend Mother St. Pierre sent Sister Leo with eight Sisters to take charge of their hospital in Palestine, Texas. The spirit of bigotry and opposition was strong in this locality, the immediate directors of the institution being particularly averse to cooperating with religious nurses. The perseverance and courage of the Sisters were frequently rewarded by conversions and reforms among their patients; but as the antagonism became more manifest, the community was withdrawn from the hospital in 1918.

Turning her attention from east Texas to the Rio Grande, Reverend Mother St. Pierre sent four Sisters to conduct the public school in Roma. With an enrollment of ninety boys and girls the school prospered until 1897, when the town officials, having objected to the teachers' wearing the religious habit in the classrooms, they were recalled to the Motherhouse.

At the invitation of the authorities of San Antonio, Sister Angela and four assistants took charge of the City Hospital. The building, a dilapidated structure, parts of which were totally unfit for use, continued to be a refuge for the sick until 1892, when it was condemned and many of the patients were removed to the Santa Rosa Infirmary.

While thus striving to devote her energies to the glory of God and the benefit of humanity Reverend Mother St. Pierre's courage and fortitude were severely tested. The Angel of Death visited the Community frequently during the foundation days to take from it Sisters, who, in the freshness of their youth and in the height of their usefulness were overcome by disease. A less intrepid character would perhaps have faltered but the strong faith and

tender piety of the young Superioress were proof against discouragement. Traces of her sufferings are visible in every letter written between 1880 and 1885; yet these same missives reveal the tender solicitude she had for those who generously gave both love and service to their Congregation. "Be courageous in your sufferings, my dear children," she wrote on a certain occasion when business called her from San Antonio; "keep in mind the true spirit of the Incarnate Word—that spirit which should distinguish you as His own before men and angels. Be fervent; if you cannot do more, at least suffer in silence and patience; be active in the spiritual life by being generous sufferers. Prayer is your great force; with it you can plead for your neighbor and benefit his soul when unable to assist him otherwise. Prayer, labor, and sacrifice are for a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word the great means of accomplishing the aim of her religious vocation."[4]

Devotion such as this endeared her to all the Sisters of the Congregation, who evinced their confidence and appreciation of her judgment and ability by repeatedly electing her their Superioress. The Chapter of 1887 made few changes in the administration: Sister Alphonse was elected Treasurer; Sister St. John and Sister Sacred Heart replaced Sister Gonzaga and Sister Anthony.

While reading the records of those early days one cannot overlook the fact that the Congregation dedicated the majority of its foundations to St. Joseph, and if a judgment may be based on results, the Foster-Father of the Incarnate Word was pleased with this evidence of esteem and love. Mother St. Pierre frequently remarked, "The more I love St. Joseph the more I feel the need of loving him; and I wish that all would love him and confide in him as he deserves." Writing to the Sisters toward the latter part of January, 1891, she reminded them of the devotions in honor of the sorrows and joys of St. Joseph, "Make them with

[4] *Archives at the Motherhouse.*

great fervor for your own needs and for mine. Pray also that the Sovereign Pontiff may grant that St. Joseph be crowned here in America, and that we may live to see this honor conferred on the Foster-Father of Jesus. Ask many graces for our Congregation; ask for zeal, fervor, self-sacrifice, and a true missionary spirit for all its members. Oh, my Sisters, it seems to me we are growing cold instead of increasing in love and fervor in the service of the Incarnate Word. . . . Make generous efforts to please God and God alone. We must fight against self, and lead a life of prayer, labor, and sacrifice, while we preserve peace of soul with Jesus. Is there anything better in Heaven or on earth than to be consecrated to the Incarnate Word? To lead after Him and in imitation of Him, a hidden and laborious life; to sanctify ourselves, and to help souls to know, love, and possess Him eternally?"[5]

It is safe to say that no one could share Mother St. Pierre's apprehension concerning the fervor of the Community. Those pioneers in Texas were God-fearing women, strong in faith, boundless in their trust in Providence. After the example of their Superioress they blended in their characters a gentleness and pity for suffering humanity, an austerity towards themselves; while holding to their Rule with uncompromising firmness they endeared themselves to patients, pupils, and orphans, and left holy memories which the present generation fondly and gratefully recall. The increasing number of applications for schools and hospitals was an evidence that the Sisters were becoming known and their ability appreciated. Some of these undertakings have passed out of existence, still in their time they exerted a beneficial influence upon the community at large by instilling virtue and religion in the hearts of those who came within their sphere of influence. The evident cause of many of these failures, if failures they must be called, was the lack of financial support. The parishes of Texas, still in their initial stage, were unable to provide for their schools.

[5] *Community Letter, Archives at the Motherhouse.*

Whenever it was possible the Superiors built the school-house and convent, enduring the privations and difficulties such undertakings entailed. In some instances the schools were listed as public institutions, the allotted state funds providing for the support of the teachers; however, these allottments, uncertain though they were, quickly became exhausted, and the Community was thrown upon its own resources. . . . Then, too, the population of Texas was rapidly increasing, the non-Catholic element surpassed the Catholic, and objections were made to the teachers' wearing the religious habit in the classroom. In such cases withdrawal was the only alternative.

In 1887 a request came from Bishop Jacinto Lopez of Linares, to open a school in Monterey. In response to the invitation Sister Frances Simpasteur and a community of five Sisters took charge of Colegio San José, where the difficulties which confronted the community in the beginning of the undertaking were more than counterbalanced by the good which ensued. To avoid opposition from the government, the Sisters wore a costume similar to that adopted by the community of Colegio La Purisima; but, as time wore on and the merits of the school were generally recognized, the habit was resumed without comment. Colegio San José, a boarding and day school, has enjoyed a continuous and successful career, which the Mexican Revolution of 1913 failed to interrupt. Annexed to the Colegio is a school for poor children, where each year hundreds of Monterey's most destitute little ones are cared for and instructed by the Sisters. The simple faith of these poor children is often touching. Probably no people love their religion more than the Mexicans but, unfortunately, the Church has not enough workers to devote to this particular field. Native priests and religious, barred from exercising the duties of their vocation, leave to the charity of the foreigner the care of their educational institutions; unable to cope with the situation, the latter are losing hundreds of children through proselytizing activities. To Reverend Mother St. Pierre, Mexico was a vast field for the daughters of the Incarnate Word and she longed to supply it with the

necessary schools. In the course of time the same problem faced the Congregation in Texas, where, after the example of the foundress, numerous schools were opened for the children of Mexican exiles.

Another appeal to the missionary spirit of the Community was made by Father M. Perrier, pastor of the Sacred Heart Church, San Angelo. Sister Raphael and her two companions who left San Antonio during the last days of August, enjoyed the privilege of traveling in the third train that entered the little western town. Religious were seldom seen in some sections of Texas in the early eighties, consequently, the young missionaries were the recipients of many acts of kindness performed by their traveling companions. Arrived at their destination they were met by Father John Sheehan, who conducted them to their future home, a little adobe house of three rooms; nearby was an unfinished lumber building which was to serve the purpose of a schoolhouse. It was a typical Texas mission, but it failed to discourage the happy band who rejoiced at the possibilities the new field presented.

On the first day of October the Immaculate Conception School opened its doors to twenty pupils, the number increasing to sixty before the end of the month; as the registration continued the Community undertook the construction of a large lumber building which was equipped for high school purposes. San Angelo was surrounded by large and wealthy ranches, consequently, it was not long before the Immaculate Conception Academy, as the institution was then called, became popular as a boarding school, many of the most prominent families, both Catholic and non-Catholic, having confided their daughters to the care and instruction of the Sisters. The music and art classes were well attended, and a spirit of industry and wholesome ambition prevailed among those happy, straightforward girls from the Texas ranches. Time passed, leaving pleasant memories of well-filled class hours with occasional recreation days spent on the banks of the Concho River, the innocent-looking little stream which frets through the city, overflows in time of storms and frequently threatens the safety of the popu-

lation. With time came changes; disastrous droughts which often lasted two and sometimes three years brought ruin and failure to many of the ranch owners, while others moved to large business centers. The school thereby lost its strongest support, and the Congregation sold the building to the parish. The Immaculate Conception School continued its mission as a day institute, respected and loved by those of its former pupils who remained in the city.

Evidences of this devotion were given during recent years when the community mourned the death of one of the faculty, Sister Margaret Alacoque Watters. The oldest of four sisters who have given their services to the Congregation, Sister M. Alacoque came from Ireland when scarcely sixteen years of age; at the close of her novitiate training in San Antonio, she was sent as a teacher to San Angelo, where despite her frail and delicate health she was an example of devotedness to duty. Death came suddenly and unexpectedly, but it seemed a fitting end for a life of such sweet candor and innocence. Although but a short time in San Angelo, her refined and gentle nature had won the love of pupils and parents and their grief was touching. Mr. Peter McKinley, a lifelong friend of the community, insisted on taking charge of the funeral. The plain, unvarnished coffin prescribed for a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word was replaced by a handsome casket; and the simple black cross made way for one of marble. The little burial plot, surrounded by its neat iron fence, ornamented with its even lawns and well-kept cedar trees, was the gift of the same benefactor who, until his death in 1914, kept the burial plot in perfect condition. Not many years later Sister M. Alacoque was joined by Sister M. Roberta, whom God had gifted with a voice of marvelous sweetness, and by Sister M. Justina, whose life was a radiation of joyousness. All these young and ardent religious were called in the prime of life, and the Congregation, while rejoicing in their lot, mourns their absence.

In 1888, Reverend Mother St. Pierre opened hospitals in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and in Tyler, Texas. Whereas financial diffi-

culties brought about the closing of these two institutions after a brief but useful existence, opposition from the newly appointed chief surgeon, Doctor Hogeboon, effected the withdrawal of the Sisters from the hospital opened in Fort Madison, Iowa.

In January, 1889, a new field was opened to the activities of the Community when Sister Alphonse and eight Sisters took charge of the Missouri-Pacific Hospital in St. Louis. Although many of the doctors and surgeons of this institution were non-Catholics, the courtesy and esteem which always existed between directors and nurses was productive of immeasurable good. A neatly furnished chapel on the third floor, where Mass was said daily by one of the Franciscan Fathers, gave the Sisters an opportunity of having all their spiritual exercises in peace and quiet. There too the patients, many of whom were crippled and maimed, gathered every morning to receive from the Giver of Life the fortitude and patience their sufferings demanded. It is not surprising that many hearts ached when the Superiors of the Congregation, experiencing difficulties in supplying the demands of the private hospitals, decided to withdraw the Sisters from those of the railroads. The facility with which the companies may now secure efficient nurses justified them in consigning the Missouri-Pacific Hospital to secular administration in 1923.

Southern Missouri was visited by the Community in 1890, when the Missouri-Kansas and Texas Railroad Company invited Reverend Mother St. Pierre to take charge of their hospital in Sedalia. Before many years had passed the company, obliged to provide larger accommodations for the patients, converted the General Office Building into a permanent hospital, which, like the Missouri-Pacific, has had a successful and useful career. Its first community consisted of Sister Victor and six companions.

Once more Reverend Mother was confronted with the problem of supplying all these houses with the assistance their activities required; though constant accessions were made to the ranks of the Sisterhood from Europe, Texas, Louisiana, and Mexico, the personnel was not sufficient. In 1889, according to the decision

of the Council, Sister St. Paul Boyle was sent to Ireland and Sister Ignatius to Germany in search of candidates. The result of these quests was a band of thirty young ladies who eventually became useful and edifying members of the Community.

Shortly after returning from Europe Sister St. Paul was elected to the office of Treasurer to replace Sister Alphonse, who had been sent to St. Louis; Sister St. John was chosen Secretary and Sister Stanislaus and Sister André, Consulters. In the person of Sister St. Paul, the office of Treasurer was intrusted to one who was remarkable for her business ability. A practical financier, she possessed the soul of integrity and straightforwardness, was devoted to the Community, and was a thorough religious. Her character was almost unique in its apparent sternness, but her intimate friends knew her to be broad, tolerant, and kindly. Only two short years were granted her as Treasurer of the Congregation, for she died at the age of thirty-nine, revered and esteemed by every Sister.

A hospital in Kansas City opened by Sister M. Nativity with a staff of nine Sisters, a school in West de Pere, Wisconsin, conducted by Sister Mary Louise, and a home for the aged in Monterey, Mexico, are recorded in the Annals for 1890. Although the Constitutions mentioned the care of the aged in institutions for old people as one of the secondary objects of the Congregation, the Superiors had not been able financially to make the necessary arrangements. Hospicio Ortigosa, Monterey, offered the opportunity long desired, and in the early spring Sister Julia and three companions departed for the mission. This institution, called after the founder who endowed it with ample revenues to defray all its expenses, was a haven of rest and peace to the poor who, in their declining years, were made happy by the opportunities there available. A comfortable home, set in the midst of shady and spacious grounds, flower gardens, and pleasant walks where hours of recreation were spent, a simple but beautiful little chapel —such was the environment which made the old people forget their past hours of heartache and sorrow. The foundation of this

home for the aged and the completion of St. John's Orphanage, San Antonio, marked the close of that long series of activities inaugurated by the installation of Reverend Mother St. Pierre as Superioress of the Congregation.

St. John's Orphanage, erected on the southwest corner of the Santa Rosa grounds, was a substantial stone building, its long shady galleries on every floor affording a pleasant appearance as well as ample facilities for fresh air. In communicating to the Sisters the news of the completion of the Orphanage, Reverend Mother wrote: "We have at present over thirty little boys and we hope that when their number increases our Lord will give us the means to provide a home for ourselves."[6]

In the designs of an all-wise Providence she was not to see the fulfillment of this desire. For some months preceding her letter Reverend Mother's health had been weakening under the strain of her laborious life. Her assistants, hoping that a sojourn in the North would prove beneficial, prevailed upon her to leave for Waukesha, Wisconsin, in August, 1890.

"It has pleased the Divine Master to place on me a portion of the cross," she wrote to a Sister before departing. "My health is not good, and at times my sufferings are acute. Blessed be God's adorable Will. Pray that in union with Jesus I may be a generous sufferer. Day after day I have but one regret—that of not profiting by the occasions of expiation the Incarnate Word sends me; I have only one ambition—to love Him more. But desires are not actions. When I consider myself as I am, I am filled with terror at the thought that perhaps I injure some souls on account of my weakness and imperfections."[7]

Arriving in Waukesha, Reverend Mother learned that the disease was too far advanced for a permanent cure. Nevertheless hopes were entertained for a partial recovery as her Community letter proves:

"When my severe illness forced my Sisters to send me into exile—it is exile for a religious to be forced to live outside the atmosphere of her Convent home—I felt my love for each of you, and for our dear

[6] This letter is dated December 23, 1890.
[7] *Archives at the Motherhouse.*

Congregation, more than words can tell. For a moment I reckoned life by days; and the greatest, indeed, the only natural regret that troubled me was that I should leave you and die so far away from my dear children. But as nothing can please our Heavenly Father more than an entire abandonment to His Will, I pronounced my 'Fiat.' Yes, my heart was ready and death was welcome. Why should we shrink from the supreme moment that will secure us against sin and bring us into the possession of our loving and merciful Spouse? . . . I believed my last hour had come and that only in Heaven would I meet you again. However, you prayed so earnestly, and kind friends even in distant countries joined so earnestly in your petitions, that the Incarnate Word was pleased to hear them; . . . I know that you are happy to hear of your old Mother's return; I thank you for your letters of filial affection, and I assure you of my sincerest desire to help you to the best of my ability. Physically I cannot accomplish much; yet, I can love you as ever." [8]

Disappointed by the results of this journey, Bishop Neraz and the Sisters urged the dear sufferer to follow the advice of Doctor Herff and seek recovery in Carlsbad, Austria. Her community letter manifests the bitter suffering this trial entailed:

"This decision, my dear Sisters, is for me an occasion for suffering. I was anticipating the pleasure of seeing our Sisters at home during the vacation, and of bearing a part of their joys and sorrows. Oh, how much good it would do my poor heart to see you, each and all, before embarking on this voyage. But it is useless to speak of things that are merely sentimental, when I know and believe that the happiness of a religious is found only in sacrifice and in the perfect accomplishment of God's Will. Let us unite in submitting to this adorable Will of the Incarnate Word, who knows why He orders things so contrary to our human views. . . . I cannot write more; my soul and body are depressed. If God wills I shall come back to you with renewed health; but as the future is veiled from us both you and I should prepare for death. Mindful of this, I humbly beg you to forgive the wrongs I have done you. . . . Goodbye, my dear children; I thank you for your constant love and forbearance, and I invoke on you the blessing of the Incarnate Word. . . ." [9]

The care and direction of the religious family which she had truly loved, and the works of mercy to which she had devoted herself, were now confided to other hands, while sorrowful but

[8] Date of letter December 23, 1890.
[9] Date of letter May 15, 1891.

resigned, Reverend Mother St. Pierre submitted to her second and final exile.

The parting from the Sisters of Santa Rosa and the two orphanages, St. Joseph's and St. John's, was truly affecting; something seemed to tell them it was a last farewell and they cherished the parting words of their loved Superioress: "Good-bye, my dear children; be faithful to your vocation, be kind to the poor, carry on the work because I know not if I shall return."

Accompanied by Sister Raphael Albinger, Reverend Mother started on her journey early in June, 1891, making brief stops at some of the local houses and reaching New York on the thirteenth. How painful must have been her emotions as standing on deck and watching the great city recede from view she contrasted this departure with former ones, when, full of hope and health and courage, she crossed the Atlantic in quest of workers for the Master's vineyard. The voyage to Havre was without mishap, and the travelers hastened to Paris, then to Beaujeu, the home of Mother St. Pierre. While sorrowfully parting from her adopted home in Texas she must have found consolation in anticipating a joyful greeting from her loved ones in France. But there another sorrow awaited her. Mother St. Pierre arrived just in time for the funeral of her mother. Truly the work of detachment was being rapidly consummated, and now more than ever did she need the strength derived from her favorite ejaculation: "My God, Thy Will be done."

Thoroughly exhausted she reached Carlsbad after a short stay at the Monastery of the Incarnate Word in Lyons. The specialist entertained some hope, but Reverend Mother realized that only a miracle could restore her to health. The impossibility of attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass added to her sufferings, while the tedium of life seemed almost unbearable. "Three months without hearing Mass," she wrote on October 13; "it seems impossible to make one step; I am exceedingly weak and it is a task to write these few lines."

As a last resort Reverend Mother returned to Lyons, after a

brief stop at Treves, where she had the privilege of touching the sacred tunic of our Lord. With what lively faith and piety this act of devotion was performed may be inferred from the ardent and simple love she bore the Person of the Incarnate Word. "If in kissing the hem of His garment she begged for restoration to health, the favor was not granted, for her mission in this world was accomplished and it pleased the Incarnate Word to lead her back to Lyons, the cradle of her religious life."[10]

Alarmed at the change three months had effected, the Sisters gently informed her of the physician's verdict concerning her approaching end. The thought of dying so far from her convent home must have increased her sufferings, but her resignation was heroic. All that sisterly charity could suggest was performed for the dear invalid. Reverend Mother Salome, the Superioress of the monastery, spent several hours daily in the sick room, encouraging her who knew well how to encourage others at the last solemn moment. Although suffering intensely, a perfect peace and abandonment to God's pleasure were manifested in every word and action of the dying religious, who, with sentiments of liveliest faith, received Extreme Unction on the first of November.[11]

As soon as the news of Reverend Mother St. Pierre's condition reached San Antonio, Bishop Neraz advised Mother M. Madeleine and Sister Alphonse to depart for France immediately. "Their arrival at the Monastery of Lyons afforded the greatest consolation to our dying Mother; prayers and supplications for her recovery were redoubled, four religious communities taking part in a novena for this intention. A novena of Masses was offered in the Church of Our Lady of Fourvières, but our Mother's soul was ripe for Heaven and she might not be detained."[12] On the day preceding her death, Reverend Mother regained consciousness. After imparting to Mother Madeleine and Sister Alphonse a blessing for all her absent Sisters, she exhorted them to maintain among the members

[10] *Annals of the Congregation.*
[11] *Annals of the Congregation.*
[12] *Idem.*

of the Community a spirit of prayer and charity. At eight o'clock in the evening of December 18, she received the Holy Viaticum and at four o'clock the following morning her soul took its flight to God.

After the ceremonies in the monastery chapel, the body rested in the Loyasse cemetery until 1895, when all that was mortal of this loved Superioress was conveyed to her convent home in Texas. The solemn Requiem Mass on Tuesday, July 16, was said by the chaplain of Santa Rosa Infirmary, Reverend J. B. E. Audet assisted by Reverend J. A. Dumoline and Reverend F. Spenner as deacon and subdeacon. The sermon was delivered by Reverend C. J. Smith, a sincere friend of Reverend Mother and her Community. "The chapel was filled with prominent persons, non-Catholic as well as Catholic, who came to attend the funeral and pay the last tribute of respect to the remains of one whom they learned to esteem so highly during life."[13] The interment was in San Fernando's Cemetery, where a simple cross and slab mark the last resting place of her, whose intense love of the Incarnate Word and tender devotion for her Sisters have made her memory a precious legacy.

With Right Reverend N. A. Gallagher, Bishop of Galveston, the bereaved Community could say:

"The thought of her loss is not all sorrow, for there is consolation in knowing that a life like that of Mother St. Pierre's, filled with good works and spent in devotedness to God as a model religious, terminates here, only to begin in Heaven the enjoyment of a well earned reward. She labored with earnestness for the honor of God and the good of souls; and was conformed to the image of the Incarnate Word by suffering with Him."

Letters of condolence which came from Europe, Mexico, and the various States in which the Sisters were engaged, though varied in manner, conveyed the same sentiments: sincere admiration for her who had been a model religious; regret that a missionary with such zeal for God's poor should have died so young. Reverend

[13] *Southern Messenger*, July 18, 1895.

Mother St. Pierre was but forty-six years of age at the time of her death, twenty-two of which she had spent in San Antonio. Comparatively speaking, this was a brief span, but so earnestly and effectively had she labored that her influence is felt even to the present day. Impressed with the conviction that a religious can be faithful only in proportion as her soul is filled with the love of God, and that the future of the Congregation depended mainly on a good beginning, she strove to inculcate in her daughters a spirit of faith, love for the interior life, strict observance of obedience, humility, and poverty. While inspiring respect for authority she never weakened the affection of the Sisters for herself; while imposing obedience she caused it to be loved. Her high idea of the responsibility implied in the charge of directing the Congregation caused her to seek strength in prayer and recollection; and every moment that duty did not call her elsewhere found her before the tabernacle. Often during those early days of trial and opposition she was known to pass the greater part of the night silently praying in the little Santa Rosa Chapel. Yet no sign of sorrow ever betrayed her feelings, the recreations were always cheerful, and her greatest joy was to share those hours with her Sisters.

Thus lived, labored, and died one of the outstanding figures of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. From a little band of three simple, unassuming women, she had watched the Community grow until it numbered three hundred; from the unpretentious Santa Rosa she had seen the charity of her Sisters extend until twenty-nine houses were included under her administration.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Administration of Reverend Mother Ignatius. Death of Bishop C. M. Dubuis.—Death of Bishop J. C. Neraz. 1891—1894.

Reverend Mother St. Pierre was succeeded by Mother Ignatius, Gertrude Saar, a religious whose strong personality, great tact, and genuine ability have caused her name to be forever linked with those of the foundresses of the Congregation.

Born in Labach, Prussia, in 1858, Gertrude passed her childhood in an atmosphere of piety and culture. A close student, she elected the teaching profession for her life work and at the age of eighteen accepted a position in one of the Labach schools. Though remarkably successful in the classroom, she felt the narrowness of her sphere and longed to devote her energies to the mission fields of America. Hearing of Reverend Mother St. Pierre's visit to Europe, in 1878, she tendered her resignation to the school authorities and prepared to leave for the United States. Her parish priest and school superintendent opposed her design, but Gertrude's decision was the result of calm and deep reflection; thoroughly convinced that she was acting in accordance with the Divine Will, she bade farewell to her mother and sister and joined Mother St. Pierre in Havre.

Arriving in San Antonio, November 21, she began with all the fervor of her nature to prepare for her career as a Sister of Charity. Simple and unpretentious, virtue seemed natural to her, and her reverence in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament was a source of inspiration for all who witnessed it. She had been in the postulate but two weeks, when, one morning, Reverend Mother St. Pierre called the attention of a novice to the heavenly smile illumining the face of the new candidate, who, oblivious to surroundings was making her thanksgiving after Holy Communion. Then as if to protect her from even an occasion of vanity, Rever-

end Mother remarked: "Never tell my Gertrude what you now see." Under the careful and strict guidance of this Superior, for whom she cherished the tenderest devotion, Gertrude was soon looked upon as a model of religious fervor. On the feast of St. Dominic, 1879, she received the habit and with it the name Ignatius; a year later, August 15, she pronounced her vows, after which she was sent to the school in Cuero and subsequently to that in Meyersville. Although she was an efficient teacher, her unanimous election to the office of Mistress of Novices recalled her to San Antonio in 1883 and curtailed her work in the Texas schools.

Realizing that the future of the foundations depended on the training given the novices, the Sisters had sought for one who was not alone imbued with the spirit of the Community but was aglow with enthusiasm for its works. Straightforward, devoted to duty, gifted with correct judgment, and keen discernment of character, Mother Ignatius was all they could desire. Stern, one might with truth say, austere towards herself, she, nevertheless, possessed a sweetness and gentleness which won confidence and respect. Loved by her novices, she taught them self-denial, humility, and unhesitating obedience to Rules and Superiors.

When the office of Superioress was made vacant by the death of Reverend Mother St. Pierre, Mother Ignatius, though but thirty-three years of age, was elected to fill that important position. The same devotion to duty, the same earnestness which characterized her early religious life, distinguished her as Superioress, in which office she was untiring in all that pertained to the general welfare of the Congregation. Never physically strong, the new position with its added strain caused so perceptible a decline that it became necessary to relinquish the duties of the novitiate which, as Reverend Mother, she had retained. The separation from the novices with whom she had been associated during the last nine years caused her deep regret, nevertheless, with characteristic cheerfulness she submitted and began the

visitation of the houses of the Congregation. Having been a teacher herself, she not only advanced the educational interests of the Community but knew how to encourage and appreciate the efforts made by all. Her visitations were happy events for the Sisters, whom her very example uplifted and strengthened. In 1892 Reverend Mother opened schools in Pulaski and Kosciuszko, two localities but a short distance from the city; the following year she undertook the erection of St. Patrick's Academy on Government Hill, San Antonio.

Anxious for the welfare of this section of the city, Bishop Neraz had constructed a small house not far from the Army Post, where classes in the elementary branches were conducted by a young lady of the neighborhood. On Sundays and holydays of obligation the building was used for Divine services, the first Mass having been offered there in the spring of 1890 by Father Ratigan of the Albany diocese. Shortly after opening this school the Bishop requested Reverend Mother Ignatius to establish another on Avenue D, a mid-point between Government Hill and the Ursuline Academy on Augusta Street. Beginning with an enrollment of fifty-four boys and girls, the school grew so rapidly that the Community, obliged to furnish larger accommodations, erected a two-storied brick structure at the intersection of Crosby and Willow Streets. The solemn dedication of the building to the Incarnate Word, on August 20, 1893, attracted the attention as well as the appreciation of every one interested in Christian education. All the Catholic lay societies of the city took part in the services, forming a procession which escorted the Bishop and the clergy from Avenue D to the new school; Bishop Neraz and his assistants entered the building which had been tastefully decorated for the occasion, and, having blessed the great bell, proceeded to bestow the Church's benediction on the house itself. In the name of the Bishop and the Community Father Ratigan thanked the members of the societies for their cooperation and expressed to the Sisters the appreciation of the clergy and the people of San Antonio for

this further proof of their useful service.[1] From the date of the blessing, Mass was offered every second Sunday in the Sisters' chapel; with the departure of Father Ratigan in May 1895, the use of the little school house near the Army Post was permanently discontinued, and the Incarnate Word Chapel became the center for all religious exercises.

Such were the beginnings of St. Patrick's parish. A few months after Father Ratigan returned to Albany Father Henderson arrived and began the erection of the church. With the dedication of the new edifice to Ireland's Patron Saint Reverend Mother Ignatius changed the name of the school to St. Patrick's Academy. The faculty, numbering six in the initial days of the institution, was soon increased to ten; a well-regulated curriculum provided for primary, grammar, and high school departments; and much attention was given to music. The skill displayed by the pupils' choir especially in the rendition of Gregorian chant has not only received commendation from experts in church music, but has made the organization the pride of Very Reverend John Pinnel, the pastor and Vicar-General of the diocese.

In 1893 Sister Stanislaus established Holy Trinity School in Monterey, Mexico; the following year Sister Denis and her community opened a school in Tyler, Texas.

These foundations terminated the activities of Reverend Mother Ignatius. Although she had passed but three years in the office of Superioress it was evident to all, herself included, that her mission was drawing to a close. The construction of the Santa Rosa Chapel, the dedication of which was to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Community's foundation in San Antonio, claimed her deepest interest and, though no doubt she desired to see the completion of this work of gratitude, her years of self-training and self-mastery helped her to accept God's Will. On October 10, 1894, having been relieved of the responsibility of her office by Bishop Neraz, who entrusted the care of the Commun-

[1] *Community Annals.*

ity to Mother M. Madeleine, Reverend Mother Ignatius received the last rites of the Church. Shortly before this ceremony she said to her assistant: "Tell my Sisters present and absent if I have any power with God I shall not forget them." That same thoughtfulness which made her dear to all the members of the Community remained with her to the end, and afforded consolation to those whom her sympathy and patience had cheered and encouraged when, as candidates, they stood on the threshold of religious life. Her sufferings were intense; yet, there was not a movement or word of impatience; she had a smile and an affectionate greeting for each Sister, and up to the day of her death performed privately every spiritual exercise required by Rule. The severe illness of Bishop Neraz had deprived her of his visits, but when the aged prelate heard that death was near, making a supreme effort, he went to Reverend Mother's room. The grief of the Sisters who witnessed that touching scene was increased by the thought that Bishop Neraz, too, was rapidly approaching his end. At half past six o'clock on the evening of October 14, Reverend Mother Ignatius, with her eyes fixed steadily on the crucifix, yielded her pure soul into the hands of her Master and Spouse. Two days later, after a solemn Requiem Mass celebrated in the Santa Rosa Chapel, at which Bishop Neraz presided, she was laid to rest in San Fernando's Cemetery. Her heart, encased in a special receptacle, is preserved with that of Reverend Mother St. Pierre in a little shrine in the community room at the Motherhouse, a silent reminder of her whose every desire was for the glory of God, the sanctification of souls, and the welfare of the Community.

The apprehension of the Sisters for the life of their friend and spiritual guide, Bishop Neraz, was not without cause. Ill health having compelled him to remain close to the Santa Rosa Infirmary, he transferred his residence to St. John's Orphanage where his love for the children became more obvious from day to day. No distinguished person ever visited him without receiving an invitation to meet the orphans and there are frequent references in the

Annals to happy recreation hours passed at St. John's and St. Joseph's. One entry made in the diary of the latter states that "Bishop Neraz, General Stanley, Major Adams, and Mayor Callahan took dinner today with the children; it was a real family gathering and the guests enjoyed the event as much if not more than the children."[2] His association with the institutions brought him into close contact with the Sisters, every one of whom he knew personally. Always kind and benevolent he could be relied on to bring comfort to a soul in trouble; and his admonitions and even stern rebukes for duty unfulfilled proved an effective monitor. Sturdy pioneer that he was, he could brook no unfaithfulness; he required ready sacrifice from every Sister of Charity, and thanks to their early training he was seldom disappointed.

In spite of poor health Bishop Neraz led a strenuous life. After the death of Bishop Manucey, of the Vicariate of Brownsville, he cared for the West, adding its scattered missions along the Rio Grande to his own vast diocese. Frequently after a day of arduous labor he would retire to rest on a cowhide, his supper having consisted of a tortilla and a piece of dried meat. During epidemics, when there was need of visiting the pesthouse or detention camp, he took the task upon himself rather than expose his priests to the danger of contagion.

"He was a man according to the heart of the people," wrote the editor of a Southern paper. "While a Bishop he was as accessible as he was when a priest; the elevation to the dignity did not change in the least his simplicity, and he was never more happy than when he saw everyone satisfied. This kindness of heart and fatherly solicitude rendered him dear to all those who had dealings with him."[3]

"His record as a missionary priest, vicar-general, administrator, and bishop forms no inconsiderable part of the history of the establishment and progress of the Church in Texas. Having shared her early trials and vicissitudes, he was happily spared to witness some of her triumphs and to see himself surrounded in the declining years of his life, not only by the most substantial monuments of his zeal, but also by many proofs of the devoted affection of his people, the clergy as well as the laity.

[2] *Diary of St. Joseph's Orphanage*, March 19, 1887.

[3] *The Southern Messenger*, San Antonio, Texas. November 22, 1894.

He enjoyed in an eminent degree the respect and esteem of his fellow citizens of every creed, and none knew him but to reverence and to love him." [4]

He died at Santa Rosa, November 14, 1894.

Six months had barely passed when the community in San Antonio received a cablegram from France announcing the death of their founder, Bishop C. M. Dubuis. To the sorrowing Sisterhood it seemed as though all the pillars which had sustained the edifice during its first quarter of a century were about to be removed. For thirteen years Bishop Dubuis had been, to use his own words "in exile." Worn out by physical exertions and suffering from rheumatism he had, in 1878, requested of Rome a coadjutor; Monseigneur Duval, Bishop of Dalcon, having been assigned, the Bishop departed for France; but yearnings for his diocese brought him back to Galveston in 1880, where, as his biographer writes, he underwent one of the saddest experiences of his whole career.

For thirty-six years he had toiled unremittingly in the vast State of Texas, thinking only of the spiritual and temporal needs of his people; time and again he had crossed the seas in quest of religious men and women who would assist him in the moral uplift of a people indifferent to their own deplorable condition; at the peril of his life he had forded swollen streams and braved the roughest elements to bring the consolations of religion to the dying; like another Paul he had made himself all things to all men, and now on his return to that State to which he had given his strength, his health, he was greeted by the cry, "America for Americans." Success and material progress had made America forget the debt she owed the past. The ingratitude was too great for the aged Bishop who, suffering in mind and body, departed for Rome in 1882, where he begged the Holy Father to relieve him of his administration and permit him to return to France.[5] In the Priests' Retreat at Vernaison he resided, active

[4] Parisot-Smith, *History of the San Antonio Diocese*, p. 174.

[5] Abbé, J. P., *op. cit.*, p. 232.

as ever when his sufferings permitted, edifying with his sanctity all who visited him, and always solicitous for his "dear Texas."

Eleven years passed quietly and Bishop Dubuis approached the golden jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood. Time and reflection had taught the people of Texas what the life of this great missionary meant to them and they united with France in celebrating the occasion. As the name of Archbishop Odin is inseparable from that of Bishop Dubuis, and as the thirteenth of July commemorated the fifty-third anniversary of the entrance of the latter into San Antonio, a joint celebration, expressive of the gratitude still existing for these two servants of God, was held in the city. A salute of twenty-one guns announced the event to the people of San Antonio, and a solemn High Mass was offered in St. Mary's Church. Congratulations and gifts were sent the "Apostle of Texas"; and in the various gatherings of the citizens Catholic and non-Catholic voiced their appreciation of the Jubilarians. The Honorable Perry Lewis in a eulogy delivered during the course of the festivities described their lives as

"dramas, beautiful and grand. Whether before the altar robed in the purple of authority and high station, or wielding the trowel and plane with the humblest workman, they reached the sublime. They did not pass before the world's vision like a flash, startling, dazzling, and leaving all in darkness. Theirs was a steady light and for almost a third of a century their generous rays were shed upon a distressed and disheartened people. Viewed by whatever light, and by whatever tests and standards of human greatness, these men were truly great. In them were concentrated the deathless attributes of human nobility. . . . Undismayed and with no weapon but a crucifix, and no commission but their trust in God they traversed the vast prairies of Texas, the dreary solitudes of which were unbroken, save by the dismal howl of the coyote and the savage whoop of the Comanche. Archbishop Odin has passed from the stage of this world's theatre and Bishop Dubuis, having passed the Psalmist's three score and ten, with his life full of honors . . . is tranquilly awaiting the summons which will take him to his eternal reward.

"If anything yet remains to fill his cup of happiness, let it be added that he has lived to see his favored institutions grow, blossom, and bear fruit; to see the vast region in which he toiled so faithfully teem with a happy, prosperous, religious people, and ere he closes his eyes for the

last time . . . may he hear the proud refrain 'the world is better that he has lived.'" [5]

Having never lost his love for Texas, Bishop Dubuis desired to visit the scenes of his former trials and triumphs. Increased sufferings necessitated the relinquishment of his desire; but disappointment failed to mar that serenity and tranquility which were characteristic of his strong soul. With his old zeal he consoled and encouraged priests, like himself invalids at Vernaison, and every gift he received from former friends went to aid the schools in France. Worn out with suffering, Bishop Dubuis died, May 22, 1895, and was buried in his home town of Coutouvre.

Distance and separation had never permitted him to lose interest in the Community of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. Even in his days of exile he wrote that "the Sanctuary of our Lady of Fourvières and that of our Lady of Lourdes are witnesses of the supplications I make to our Lady that the works of charity, so dear to our hearts, may continue their progress in Texas." While ever courteous, tactful, and sympathetic towards his spiritual daughters, he sought to engender in their hearts that spirit of faith and courage which burned within his own. Like another St. Francis Xavier, his zeal recognized no limitations when there was question of the salvation of souls. It was Bishop Dubuis who called the Community of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word into existence, it was he who encouraged the foundresses in San Antonio when things looked dark, and it was he who had the happiness of knowing that a younger generation of religious had come into the vineyard prepared to continue the work he had ably begun.

[6] *Southern Messenger*, August 10, 1893.

## CHAPTER IX.

### An Era of Progress.

### 1894—1905.

Reverend Mother Madeleine began her second term as Superioress of the Community in 1894. As foundress of the house in San Antonio and its first Superioress, she had been the assistant of Reverend Mother St. Pierre and Reverend Mother Ignatius, devoting thereby twenty-six years to the establishment of the institution. Before death terminated her services in 1906, the houses under her jurisdiction numbered fifty, the Motherhouse was permanently located on Alamo Heights, and Rome had placed on the Congregation the seal of approval.

Associated with Reverend Mother in the work of consolidation were Mother Alphonse, Assistant; Sister Gabriel, Secretary; Sister Mary John, Mistress of Novices; and the four Consulters: Sisters St. Ange, St. John, Mary of the Sacred Heart, and Athanasius; Sister Alexis was Treasurer. As the elections were held during the interim following the death of Bishop Neraz, the administrator of the diocese, Very Reverend E. M. Buffard presided; the witnesses were Father Spenner and Father R. M. Barrett. All the officers, the majority of whom had served during previous administrations, were experienced and had given evidence of ability in dealing with matters pertaining to the general welfare of the Community. A new era of progress now opened for the Sisters.

The first consideration of the Council was the establishment in San Antonio of a home for the aged. For years the need of such an institution had been felt, but lack of funds prevented the Sisters from constructing the necessary buildings. As occasion arose and the attention of the Community was drawn to deserving cases, the Superiors of Santa Rosa tried to meet the need by devoting St. Francis Ward and several private rooms to the use of the homeless. From time to time the Community purchased a few

acres of land on Flores Street; in 1895, a house having been secured in the same neighborhood, it was arranged as a temporary home with Sister Mary of Jesus in charge. Applications for admission were numerous. With courage, such as charity for the poor is alone capable of motivating and a firm confidence in Providence, Reverend Mother Madeleine undertook the construction of the present St. Francis Home. The work, though subjected to frequent interruptions, won the interest of the people of San Antonio who generously cooperated in providing a part of the necessary funds. With characteristic enthusiasm the ladies of all the parishes in the city conducted a bazaar and secured a substantial sum. On May 20, 1905, the cornerstone of the building was blessed by Bishop J. A. Forest, of San Antonio, and towards the end of the same year St. Francis Home for the Aged was opened to its guests. Like its predecessor in the field, the Hospicio Artigosa of Mexico, it has cheered many feeble old men and women, has given a warm welcome to the homeless poor, while the gentleness and courtesy of the Sisters who devote their time to the aged have brought blessings on the Congregation. In the words of Archbishop J. W. Shaw of New Orleans: "The divine scroll will unfold at the last day a touching series of deeds which prepared the way for that home where sorrow is no more, because they were done for the Incarnate Word in the Home of the Poor Man of Assisi."[1]

No one seemed more interested in this addition to the Community's activities than Bishop Forest who, like his predecessor in office, was born and educated in France. Having completed his studies at the Seminary in Lyons, he accepted the invitation of Bishop Dubuis and set out for Texas in 1862. Arriving in New Orleans during the early part of January he was ordained four months later by Archbishop Odin. The Civil War was then at its height; Ben Butler with his Federal forces commanded the city, and Father Forest, unable to go directly to San Antonio, traveled to Matamoras, Mexico, whence he made his way to

[1] Letter written on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the Congregation.

Brownsville. "In Texas, his promised land," says his friend and contemporary, Reverend P. F. Parisot, "he offered to God for the first time the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."[2] After a sojourn of one month in the Alamo City, which was reached by means of the slow-going ox-cart, Father Forest was assigned to a little settlement four miles from present Halletsville. Here "he was a stranger in a strange land with no knowledge of the people and their language. . . . But his faith was a column of fire, which lighted his path through that period of darkness; his hope stimulated his natural courage, and his ardent charity propelled him in all things. In three months he had practically acquired the English and Bohemian languages."[3]

For thirty-two years Father Forest devoted himself to the interests of the Catholics of three counties, Lavaca, Fayette, and Gonzales, winning the love of his people and the title of "Builder of Churches." Called to San Antonio after the death of Bishop Neraz, he was consecrated by Archbishop Francis Janssens of New Orleans, October 28, 1905. His first act following his installation was to visit his diocese even to its remotest parts; wherever it was possible schools and churches were erected and teaching Sisterhoods were introduced.

As ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, the Bishop soon became the friend and guide of Reverend Mother Madeleine and her Sisters. Their every project appealed to him, and it was due to his advice and encouragement that they submitted their Constitutions to Rome for papal approbation. After the blessing of St. Francis Home for the Aged he interested himself in the educational affairs of the Community, urging Reverend Mother to assist two bishops of Mexico who desired her to open schools in their dioceses. In the early spring therefore, Sister Angela and two companions were sent to Lampazos "where an old Franciscan monastery with its sacred traditions served them as convent and school."[4]

[2] PARISOT-SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
[3] *Idem.*, p. 88.
[4] *Community Records.*

Encouraged by the large enrollment and the appreciation the people of Lampazos entertained for the Sisters, the Superiors decided to build a large, substantial, and modern school building; the efforts of the pastor, Reverend M. Cabello, made this project possible, so that before many months were over, Colegio del Sagrado Corazon was a reality. Peacefully and effectively the work in the classrooms went on until the Revolution of 1913 brought the Colegio's career to a close. Hearing that the school was threatened the Sisters fled from the city without a moment's delay. As all railroad communications between Lampazos and Monterey had been cut, they made the journey in carriages, accompanied by a party of Americans who, like themselves, were obliged to leave the city. After a tiresome trip of three days over a distance which in normal conditions could have been traversed in three or four hours, the Sisters, dust-stained and weary, reached Colegio San José where they remained until assigned to other missions. Scarcely had they left Lampazos when the rebels took possession of the Colegio, plundered clothing and furniture, and having partially burned the building, departed.

The fate of the school in Linares, Mexico, opened by Sister Augustine and her three assistants in 1896, was not more fortunate than was that in Lampazos. For some time Colegio del Divino Salvador, as the school was called, had varying periods of success and failure; however, the year 1910 introduced promising conditions which seemed to justify the Community's hopes for a prosperous future. Suddenly, reports of revolutionary activities in the vicinity of the convent were circulated, and the Superiors in San Antonio, fearful for the safety of the Sisters, recalled them to the Motherhouse.

Although occupied with the foundations in Mexico Reverend Mother Madeleine gave her attention to the Santa Rosa Chapel which had been planned by Reverend Mother Ignatius and to the construction of the new wing on the east side of the original hospital building. The latter, begun in 1894, provided the institution with additional wards, dining rooms, and kitchens on the first

floor; with private rooms, operating rooms, reading and dining apartments on the second and third. With truth it could be said that Santa Rosa was keeping pace with the rapidly growing city; yet, despite all efforts the hospital failed to meet the demands made on its resources. In 1897 the structure erected twenty-three years before was replaced by the wing which now forms the west section of the building; a few years later a fourth floor was added to the entire hospital which, consolidated by means of corridors, measured three hundred and nine feet in length and fifty-two in width.

San Antonio's rapidly increasing population presented another problem to the Community. The high dry climate of the city attracted numerous tubercular patients who, owing to the nature of their disease, found it difficult to secure proper lodgings. As the hospital could not receive anyone thus afflicted, and the hotels and boarding houses closed their doors to the sufferers, the results were frequently pitiable. Out of compassion for these invalids, Reverend Mother Madeleine purchased St. Mary's Sanitarium in Boerne, Texas, which she converted into a retreat for tubercular patients exclusively. Situated at a distance of thirty-five miles from San Antonio in a locality higher, therefore more healthful than the city, Boerne offered many advantages to those who sought recovery during the early stages of the disease. The history of the Sanitarium is a long record of never-ending charities, of frequent restorations to health, and of beautiful and edifying deaths. For some years after its foundation the Sisters were obliged to submit to inconveniences because Mass was celebrated only every second Sunday in their locality; however, their patience and sacrifices were rewarded when a resident priest was assigned and the Holy Sacrifice was offered frequently in St. Mary's Chapel.

As soon as the Sanitarium in Boerne was organized Reverend Mother sent Sister Mary of the Cross to open St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Venice, Illinois; the same year Sister Remigius and her community took charge of St. Joseph's Sanitarium in St. Louis. Since the location of the latter was unfavorable St. Joseph's was

exchanged for the Josephine Hospital on Grand Avenue to which Sister Colette and her six Sister nurses were assigned. This institution owed its existence to a certain benefactress who stipulated in her contract that the hospital was to be confided to the care of religious. After a few years the president of the committee charged with the financial administration of the institution made known his intention of securing secular nurses; the Sisters then withdrew.

Requests for schools were no less frequent than were those for hospitals. In 1897 communities were sent to Windthorst and Yorktown; Sister Perpetua was Superioress of the former and Sister Mary Louise of the latter. Conditions in Yorktown were by no means comfortable; an old lumber building provided with two windows on each side and a door at either end was courteously called the school, and the equipment was in keeping with the surroundings. The community had the happiness of seeing this primitive structure replaced by present St. Mary's School which, supported and appreciated by the people, has had a successful existence.

At the request of Bishop E. J. Dunne of Dallas, Reverend Mother Madeleine opened a school in Thurber, Texas, a little mining town in Tarrant County. Through the interest of the mining company, represented by Mr. Hunter, this school was erected, equipped, and supported. The population of Thurber, composed of numerous foreigners, presented one of those difficult social problems which have challenged the educational resources of the Catholic schools. The presence of many children, most of whom were unable to speak the English language, complicated the work in the classrooms; nevertheless, with courage and perseverance the Sisters, while teaching their pupils to love and serve God were at the same time preparing them for their duties of citizenship. With the closing of the mines in recent years the industrial life of Thurber shifted to other centers and the Sisters returned to the Motherhouse in 1923.

Under the direction of Sister Augustine five Sisters opened

Colegio Guadalupano, in the archdiocese of Durango, Mexico, which, aided by Archbishop Zubiria and the clergy, achieved remarkable success. During the Revolution of 1913 Durango was reported to be the scene of atrocious violence; the convent was visited by the rebels when the city was betrayed into their hands but not the slightest disrespect was offered the Sisters. Fearful for their safety, the Superiors recalled the community to the Motherhouse, and as political disturbances continued for some time no attempt was made to reopen the school. Within recent months Sisters of another community have taken charge of the institution.

The repeated invitations of Bishop F. Fierro were answered when Colegio de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe was accepted in 1899. The unhealthful condition of Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico, as well as other reasonable objections, had deterred Reverend Mother Madeleine from acquiescing earlier; however, as Victoria presented a field wherein Catholic faith and principles had greatly weakened the mission was accepted.

A large building, formerly a seminary and now somewhat past its days of usefulnes, served the purpose of school and convent for Sister Bonaventure and her community of three Sisters. The fourteenth of September, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, records the arrival of the Sisters who were courteously welcomed by Bishop Fierro, by the parish priest, and by the ladies of the town. On the morning following their arrival the Bishop said Mass in the convent chapel, the furnishing of which he had personally supervised. While the house seemed to be furnished with what was absolutely necessary the Sisters soon found to their surprise and somewhat to their amusement that all the supplies were lent and had to be returned to their owners. Piece by piece the articles disappeared until the sole possessions of the community were reduced to three beds, five chairs, some kitchen utensils and a table. The last, highly prized on account of its utility, served its purpose well until one morning a messenger arrived and requested Senora N.'s table. Emphatically assured that there was

nothing in the house but what belonged to it the undaunted messenger returned to say that the owner's initials were on the under surface. With reluctance and fear of results the Sisters examined the part indicated and the smiling mestizo departed with Senora N.'s table.

While Sister Bonaventure and her companions smiled in the face of privations and difficulties, they exerted every endeavor to make their mission successful, using the tuition which many of the pupils paid in advance to secure the necessary equipment. The people of Victoria took a deep interest in the Colegio and the prospects for the future were bright. In 1908 death visited the community, taking one of its dearly loved members, Sister Teresa Thompson. Her thirty years of devotion and charity towards everyone, her Sisters in particular, had won for her a unique place in the hearts of the Community, and her sudden death occasioned sincere grief. Sister Teresa was laid to rest in the parish cemetery in Victoria.[5]

From Mexico Reverend Mother Madeleine turned her attention to the Texas side of the Rio Grande and sent Sister Adolph to open a school in Del Rio. While awaiting the completion of the large brick building, the Sisters held their classes in a wooden structure which was later converted into a school for the Mexican children of the district. The community conducted the school successfully until 1904 when the Del Rio house was totally destroyed by fire. Reverend Mother Madeleine and her Council now faced the alternative of abandoning the field altogether or of incurring debt for the reconstruction of the building. Reluctant to deprive so many children of the advantages of a Catholic education the decision was for reconstruction at the Community's expense; accordingly, the new Sacred Heart Academy was erected. The school for the Mexican children remained under the supervision of the Superioress of the Academy until 1914, when through the efforts of the Oblate Fathers a separate house was built for

[5] Colegio Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe was closed by the Revolution of 1913.

the Sisters. With sufficient room thus provided, a community of five Sisters, with Sister Claude, Superioress, was appointed to take charge of Our Lady of Guadalupe School.

One of the first Catholic schools on the plains of northwest Texas was St. Mary's, opened by the Community, in Clarendon, January 16, 1899. For some years this school which accommodated boarding and day pupils was productive of incalculable good; in fact as long as the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad Company made the city a center, the enrollment was large and the classes were well attended. With the removal of the offices and shops of the company the parish of Clarendon dwindled to a discouraging few. Unstinted efforts were made to keep St. Mary's in operation at least for the accommodation of boarding pupils, but an epidemic in 1911 caused the school to be closed and the Sisters were recalled to the Motherhouse. Their withdrawal was not effected, however, before the Council decided to establish an academy in Amarillo, Texas, where, at the invitation of Reverend D. J. Dunn and Doctor Fly, the Sisters had assumed the care of St. Anthony's Sanitarium. Amarillo had formerly been a mission of Clarendon, the parish of the Panhandle, until Father Dunn, realizing the superiority of its location, decided to make it the center of Catholic life on the plains. With this object in view he began the construction of the hospital, which he requested Reverend Mother Madeleine to conduct.

Mass was celebrated for the first time in the Sanitarium chapel, February 16, 1891, by Father Dunn; six weeks later Bishop E. J. Dunne of Dallas, assisted by Reverend S. P. McDonnell, performed the ceremonies of dedication. The community of St. Anthony's consisted of Sister Cleophas, Sister Eugenia, Sister Winifred, and Sister Conrad all of whom endured the trials incident to pioneer days. There were no telephones, no electric lights; sidewalks and paved streets were yet unknown; and no mode of conveyance connected the hospital with the depot. On one occasion the Sisters, having traveled to Clarendon to hear Mass, lost their way when returning from the depot and wandered for hours in the snow

before finding their home. During the rigors of an extremely severe winter, when the water pipes were frozen for weeks, the Sisters, in order to provide the institution with water, collected and melted the snow.

The Panhandle was the scene of bigotry and opposition to everything Catholic in the early nineties; even the gentleness and refinement of the Sisters met with suspicion and frigid aloofness, which only charity and generosity could conquer. Quietly they continued their work, sacrificing their own comforts that their patients, often of other creeds than their own, might not want. In all their efforts they had the sympathy and cooperation of Father Dunn, who, it is safe to say, was the greatest single factor in establishing esteem for the Church in the Panhandle.

"Ecclesiastically Father Dunn belonged to the Chicago Archdiocese; but being frail and under the threatening shadow of a deadly disease, he sought the sunnier and warmer clime of the South. Into Texas came the invalid priest and with neither trepidation of heart nor flinching of spirit stepped into the charge of a crude and composite missionary parish, covering a territory of sixty thousand square miles. His was the zeal of an Apostle, the fortitude of a martyr, the devotion of a confessor, and upon these qualities of a magnificently strong soul in a pitiably weak body were rested the foundations of the Catholic Church and the parish of Amarillo." [6]

In 1902 Father Dunn made the Sanitarium his residence. Besides fulfilling the numerous duties of his office he found time to give missions to the railroad men and to non-Catholics; churches were built in the outlying districts of the parish; and, through the assistance of Catholics and non-Catholics, he built the first little lumber church in Amarillo. For seven years Father Dunn worked, saved, and collected that he might at some future date erect a more fitting edifice. His example was an eloquent lesson for his parishioners, who earnestly cooperated in the erection of the present beautiful Romanesque church. On October 5, 1916, the new Sacred Heart Church opened its doors for the first service

[6] BUOTICH, C. D., *A Historical Sketch of the Sacred Heart Parish and its Missions in the Northwest.* Amarillo, 1922.

held within its walls—the funeral service of its builder. Worn out with responsibility and fatigue, Father Dunn became critically ill on the first Friday of September, and died at the Sanitarium, October 3, 1916, in the forty-seventh year of his age. All Amarillo mourned the death of this missionary priest, who, like many another Ambassador of Christ, had forgotten himself in his quest for souls. Differences of creed were put aside when Catholic and non-Catholic gathered at the Sacred Heart Church to pay their respects to one whose sixteen years on the plains had been spent in Christ-like zeal and charity. The Sisters at the Sanitarium lost a sincere friend in Father Dunn and those at the recently established Academy missed his assistance in the field of education.

The monuments which stand to his memory, not the least of which is St. Anthony's Sanitarium, continue their mission of charity and service. From time to time the Community has added to the building in order to accommodate the increasing number of applicants until at present it stands equipped and standardized according to the requirements of the American College of Surgeons.

While engaged in opening schools and hospitals Reverend Mother Madeleine and her Council realized that the Community could no longer consider Santa Rosa Infirmary as a Motherhouse for the Sisters. The crowded condition of the hospital as well as its location in the center of the city were not conducive to the quiet and retreat necessary for a convent, consequently, other arrangements had to be made.

The question of a suitable location had claimed the interest of Reverend Mother St. Pierre who, a short time before her death, had suggested the possibility of securing a part of Fernridge, the estate of Colonel Brackenridge. Situated on Alamo Heights, a suburb of the city, those broad acres of woods and dales watered by the Olmos and the picturesque San Antonio River offered an ideal retreat for the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. As a personal friend of the Colonel, Reverend Mother St. Pierre had not hesitated to acquaint him of her desire to purchase a

section of his property, a proposal which positively astonished the old gentleman. "Not for one moment would be consider selling a foot of Fernridge, the beauty spot of the Southwest." Years passed and the question of the Motherhouse was brought to the minds of the Council in the early nineties; but this time the Colonel's property was not mentioned. On his own initiative and to the surprise of all Mr. Brackenridge offered to sell Fernridge, an estate of two hundred and eighty acres; the payments were to be made through a series of notes, each for a certain number of years, bearing five per cent. interest, the last of which bore the date 1922.

Although the site was ideal, and the property most desirable, the thought of the responsibility and the payment of notes at regular intervals made the Sisters hesitate. Those in charge of the financial affairs of the Community prayed, reflected, consulted, while interested friends, among whom was Bishop Forest, urged them to accept the Colonel's offer. After a public novena in which the entire Sisterhood participated, a meeting was held for the purpose of deliberating definitively. The day following this consultation the contracts were signed and Fernridge became the property of the Community. The name of the estate, changed to Brackenridge Villa out of compliment to the former owner, was later altered to "Alamo Heights."

The magnificent residence of a millionaire with its rich appointments and valuable library now became the home of the daughters of the Incarnate Word. On June 4, 1897, the Sisters took possession, and on the feast of the Sacred Heart, Reverend E. P. Schmitt of Indiana celebrated the first Mass in the new home. At the close of the summer normal and the retreat the novitiate which, during the last fifteen years had been located at St. John's Orphanage, was transferred to the Villa.

For three years the "Residence," as Colonel Brackenridge's former home is called, served the purpose of a convent. During this time Reverend Mother Madeleine planned the construction of the Motherhouse, the cornerstone of which was blessed by Reverend

Audet, the Vicar General of the diocese, on October 15, 1899. As soon as the convent was completed the Sisters moved into their new home, thereby leaving the residence for the use of the chaplain and the visiting clergy.

With the exception of the chapel the Motherhouse was complete in every detail. Desirous of building a conventual church which would in some manner express the love the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word bore their Divine Guest, Reverend Mother Madeleine did not include this building in the plans of 1899 but waited a more opportune moment. A large room on the first floor which later became the community-room was arranged temporarily and served the purpose of a chapel until 1906.

The extensive grounds, healthful location, and magnificent surroundings made Alamo Heights an ideal site for a boarding school. True, the Sisters were conducting St. Patrick's Academy on Government Hill, where a few boarders could be accommodated. But the frequent requests made by parents who were desirous of placing their daughters under the continuous care of the Sisters suggested the idea of laying the foundation for a more extensive institution. Accordingly, a part of the new building was set aside for the use of the boarders and the necessary equipment installed. The soul of this movement was Sister Gabriel, the Inspectress of Schools, whose long association with the Sisters and their missions made her conversant with the possibilities of such an undertaking. Confident that the work would succeed, she drew from the ranks of the Community Sister Nicholas, Sister Celestine, and Sister Julius, whom she constituted the first teaching staff of the Incarnate Word Academy.

Sister Nicholas, who in time was to become the mainstay and support of Sister Gabriel in the organizing of the new institute, was well qualified mentally and spiritually for the position. Combining a cultivated mind with gentleness and refinement, she was prepared to set before her pupils a constant example of the most attractive and imitable virtues. Not for one moment did either she or Sister Gabriel lose heart in their undertaking, nor did their

smiling faces ever betray the interior struggle waged to surmount fault-finding and opposition.

The school opened on September 13, with Grace Griffin, of Tyler, Texas, a former pupil of Sister Nicholas, its first boarder. "By the close of the scholastic term," wrote Sister Julius, "we had registered seven pupils, whom we called our Seven Joys. We felt that while the mustard seed could hardly be smaller it would develop into a lofty tree which in time would be a credit to our Congregation."

"Our 'Seven' consisted of six boarders and one day-pupil; three belonged to the High School, the rest to the preparatory department. The curriculum for the former included Religion, English, mathematics, Latin, German, history, and the commercial branches; the grades followed the usual program; instruction in vocal and instrumental music was given by Sister Celestine; plain sewing, embroidery, and physical culture had their allotted time. Although a day uniform was adopted at the opening of the Academy, the regulations which prescribed for Sundays and special occasions a grey dress and cap trimmed with red braid were not enforced until the latter part of the first year. The grey was symbolic of the South, the red of the Incarnate Word."[7]

Although Sister Nicholas and her assistants kept their pupils continuously occupied there are references in the Academy Annals to recreation days when the girls, accompanied by their directress, took long walks to the "Iron Gate" or made excursions to the "Big Field." The daily recreation hour from five to six was spent in the flat bottomed boats which were rowed up and down the San Antonio River from its source to the rapids; and woe to the rowers if they did not turn the boat before it reached the rapids. The river was seldom deep but capsizing meant a cold bath and the disapproval of Sister Nicholas.

The first year passed quickly bringing in its train the commencement exercises. All the pupils were promising musicians; two had very good voices, and their program delighted the audience which was too large to be accommodated in the improvised hall.

[7] *Community Annals—Incarnate Word College Archives.*

"During the first week of September we began our second year with an enrollment of fifteen pupils, the number gradually increasing until at the close of the first term we could say we had a fairly good attendance. Laura Brown McDonald, the first graduate of the Academy, and her sister Marguerite entered that year, and as the faculty needed additional teachers Miss Walsh, later Sister Imelda, was appointed to the grade school." [8]

In 1903 Sister Nicholas graduated her second and last class. The same enthusiasm and energy that characterized all her efforts in connection with the Academy were still evident, but as the work strengthened, her health declined. Hoping that the climate of Saltillo would prove beneficial, Reverend Mother Madeleine sent her to Mexico as soon as the vacation days began. The change proving ineffectual, she returned to the Motherhouse where on the ninth of November she rendered her noble soul to God. The loss of this exemplary religious was a severe one for the institution as well as for Sister Gabriel, who had relied implicitly on her discretion and judgment; now, with a determination which marked all Sister Gabriel's work in regard to the schools, she shouldered the responsibility and continued what had been well commenced. Under her supervision the west wing of the Motherhouse which had been practically given over to the work of the Academy was converted into classrooms, assembly hall, and dormitories; the music and art departments were thoroughly furnished, and the newly erected St. Cecilia's Auditorium afforded facilities for entertainments and theatricals. The highest expectations regarding the Academy were being realized, and the teaching staff, with Sister Julius, the principal, was increased as the registration grew.

After the death of Sister Nicholas, Sister Polycarp Walsh, was appointed to fill the vacant office. The rare gifts of the new directress, whose beautiful personality and forceful character fitted her in a special manner for the position, were soon recognized. A woman of culture and accomplishments, tactful and deeply impressed with the needs of a solid religious training for young women, Sister Polycarp was appointed Superioress of the Mother-

[8] *Idem.*

house in 1909, with the affairs of the Academy as her special charge. In the capacity of Superioress her sphere of influence widened so that not only the student body but the young teachers were won by her nobles qualities of heart and mind. There was nothing petty, nothing selfish about her; straightforward and just, Sister Polycarp was at the same time an humble religious who left in the minds of all who knew her a grateful and blessed memory. For thirteen years she devoted herself unremittingly to the Academy; she knew every pupil intimately, and her sympathy and motherliness won their love and reverence. The influence which she exercised over the girls was used by her to instil in their hearts a love of solid virtue and piety; to inspire them with noble ideals and tender and filial devotion to our Blessed Mother. During her administration as directress the institution, now well known, drew the patronage and appreciation of many of the leading families of the South as well as of Mexico; moreover, the ranks of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word were considerably increased by young girls who were led to practice the beautiful lessons daily depicted in the life of their directress.

It was a sorrowful day for the Sisters and the Alumnae of the Academy when Mother Polycarp, whose health had been failing for many months, was appointed to St. Mary's Academy, Amarillo. Hoping that a change would prove beneficial, Reverend Mother Alphonse assigned her to the mission in the Panhandle in 1915. From there she was sent to St. Joseph's Infirmary, Fort Worth, where she died February 6, 1916. Few have been so greatly loved, none more tenderly remembered, than this devoted religious whose only desire was to draw souls closer to God. The good she did for the Church and the Congregation is noteworthy, and her memory is a sacred legacy to all connected with the Sisterhood.

The Southern Messenger of February 9, 1916, in announcing her death, adds:

"Mother Polycarp had a smile for the victor, a helping hand for the weak, and she placed before both the motto which was ever her standard: 'Live your own life well and care not what the world may think.' She was the mirror which young hearts looked into for everything which is

pure and great in womanhood. Well for her now that in her religious life, all her actions great and small, were done for the greater glory of the Incarnate Word and for the love of our Immaculate Mother. May she rest in peace."

Another factor in the early development of the Academy was Mother Mary John, who quietly assisted in guiding the destinies of the growing institution. Although occupied with the duties pertaining to the office of Mistress of Novices, she found time to lend her valuable experience to the teachers and through her conceptions of education to give them a broader and clearer vision relative to the needs of the young girls of today. Through her encouragement the Sisters, in 1909, requested the revision of the charter whereby they were empowered by the State to grant degrees. The institution begun inauspiciously nine years before, had now an enrollment of one hundred and twenty-five pupils and was known as the College and Academy of the Incarnate Word. The impetus which assured success gave the Community was not confined to the College but was communicated to all the teachers, who put forth every effort to become efficient in their profession.

The year that saw the Motherhouse transferred to the new building on Alamo Heights, was followed by remarkable additions to the Sisterhood. Mother Alphonse and Mother Mary John who visited France, Germany, and Ireland in 1900, returned to San Antonio with sixty-three candidates. The arrival of this band of eager and zealous aspirants was timely, for the spacious apartments in the new building, reserved exclusively for the postulants, had but lately been completed. A short time after the two Mothers returned the Chapter of elections was held, the reports of which show that Sister Felicitas and Sister Seraphim replaced Sister St. Ange and Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart in the Council.

With conditions satisfactorily arranged at the Motherhouse, the administration opened schools in Falls City and in Marshall, Texas. The latter was the result of an invitation of Monsignor Granger who donated a tract of land to the Community on condition that

the Sisters would build thereon a training school for boys. In conformity with this agreement Reverend Mother Madeleine constructed a large brick building with accommodations for a limited number of boarders. The institute, the only one of its kind conducted by the Congregation, was dedicated to St. Joseph and blessed by Bishop E. J. Dunne, of Dallas, to whose diocese Marshall belongs. Under the gentle guidance of Sister Mary of the Cross, the happy beginnings of the first community culminated in success and patronage which twenty-three years have not diminished.

In 1902 three houses were opened in Mexico; Colegio del Sagrado Corazon, in Tampico; Colegio Guadalupano, in Chihuahua; and Asilo Colon, a home for orphan children, in Mexico City. Under the direction of Sister Berchmanns and her three companions the classes in Tampico had scarcely been organized when yellow fever broke out, claiming among its victims one of the community, Sister M. Silverius. Though the sad beginnings were hardly reassuring, the school was continued as soon as conditions permitted. The Revolution of 1913 having interrupted the work, the Superiors recalled the Sisters to the Motherhouse and the Colegio in Tampico was not reopened by the Community until 1919.

Foundations were likewise made in Longview, Texas; Texarkana, Arkansas; C. P. Diaz; Hermosillo, Oaxaca; and Saltillo, Mexico. The success of the school established in Hermosillo, in the diocese of Sonora, was due in great part to Bishop I. Valdespino, who erected a large, modern building which served the purpose of a day and boarding school. The Bishop, a staunch advocate of Catholic education, was untiring in his efforts to make Colegio Guadalupano a success. Some time later, he inaugurated the Colegio Guadalupano in Durango which he likewise confided to the care of the Community.

When the latter school was closed, its exiled Bishop sought refuge in San Antonio; there, welcomed at the chaplain's residence, he, in company with five other prelates, like himself the

object of persecution, dwelt for two years in the quiet and seclusion of Alamo Heights.

With the foundation of these institutions the Council of 1902, which, with two exceptions, was the same as that of the previous term, decided that the existing houses needed strengthening, therefore, no other offers would be considered. The elections held in August had given to Reverend Mother Madeleine two able advisers in the persons of Sister Pachomius Hennessy, and Sister Michael Vauthier. The former, who replaced Sister Athanasius, had been treasurer at the Santa Rosa Infirmary, where, despite the most distracting and annoying circumstances she had been remarkable for her habitual tranquillity and gentleness. Not only her Sisters but the doctors often wondered at the sweet and uniform disposition which by word or act had never revealed impatience. Her services in the interest of the Community were curtailed by death, which, in 1905, closed her religious career of sixteen years.

Sister Michael, a teacher in Germany before her entrance into the Community, continued her work in the classrooms until called to the Motherhouse by the elections of 1903. Far from abandoning her favorite occupation, she found time to assist the teachers in the Academy by giving instructions in Latin and mathematics.

With this slight adjustment in the personnel, the Council continued its work of consolidating the individual houses of the Community. As 1904 was the jubilee year of the promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, who are enjoined by Rule to have a special devotion to this prerogative of our Blessed Mother, observed the anniversary in a fitting manner.

A souvenir of the jubilee year is the Grotto of Lourdes, on the Motherhouse grounds, to the erection of which all the houses of the Community contributed. Planned and partly executed by Reverend J. G. Bednarek, a young priest from the Chicago Archdiocese, the grotto is a beautiful replica in piled stone of the shrine of Lourdes. It is no less a monument to the inventive genius of Father Bednarek, who, on coming to San Antonio for

his health, was invited to make the chaplain's residence his home. Unusually gifted, a devoted client of Our Lady, he enthusiastically offered to supervise the construction of the shrine. With the laborers he quarried stone, helped to place the great blocks in position, and wired the whole structure himself.

On the seventh of December the dedicatory ceremonies were performed by Bishop Forest, assisted by Father J. G. Bednarek and Father F. Schneider, C. PP. S., the chaplain of the convent. On the following day the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Mass was celebrated for the first time at the grotto; in the evening a procession of the children of St. Joseph's and St. John's Orphanages, the pupils of the Academy, the postulants, the novices, and the professed Sisters marched from the Motherhouse to the shrine, singing the Litany of our Blessed Mother. As they approached, the grotto shone forth in all its beauty and simplicity. The aureole around the head of Our Lady, a beautiful statue donated by Mr. William C. Sullivan in memory of his mother, bore, in electric lights, the words: "Ego sum Immaculata Conceptio"; below the large cross which surmounts the structure and which was outlined in lights was the single word "Immaculata." Each pointed rock bore an electric jet, lights gleamed and twingled among the crevices and to the right of the shrine a fountain hidden among the rocks sent its streams of colored waters high into the air. It was a sight that lingered long in the memory of all present that night and called forth a grateful prayer for the one who had generously given his time and ability to this work of art.

The jubilee celebration inaugurated a devotional custom at the Motherhouse. On the principal feasts of Our Lady, the Sisters and the student-body go in procession to the grotto, where, after chanting the Litany, they return to the chapel for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The shrine, however, is not the object of an occasional visit only; it is the favorite spot on the convent grounds for young and old to gather every evening and to recite three "Aves" for the deceased members and benefactors of the Congregation.

## CHAPTER X.

### Papal Approbation.
### 1905—1910.

The officers of the new administration had scarcely assumed their duties when conditions in France attracted their attention. By the Associations Act of 1901, the government had provided that no religious order should exist in the Republic unless it had received governmental authorization. As the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament had been fully sanctioned, it was not immediately affected by the Act; nevertheless, the members of the community were not blind to the fact that legislation had assumed a distinctly anti-clerical tone. If their institution did not share the lot of the ten thousand schools which were closed during the two years following the passage of the Act, and if they were not driven from their home as were so many other religious teachers, it was not because France desired to afford her children of the Catholic faith the rights of an education based on Catholic principles. The officials were but waiting a more propitious moment to strike the blow which would complete the work begun in 1901. To Emil Combes, premier from 1903 to 1905, was assigned the task. His first step was to secure the enactment of another bill against the Congregations whereby all members of religious associations, whether authorized or unauthorized, would be deprived within ten years of the right to teach in private as well as in public schools.[1] Almost immediately after the passage of the law the nuns of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Lyons were ordered to leave the country. Reverend Mother St. Pierre and her community were prepared for the action of the Parliament, nevertheless, its summary execution was a shock. Students and patrons of the institution, the

[1] Hayes, *A Political and Social History of Modern Europe*, vol. II, p. 357. New York, 1920.

majority of whom dwelt in the Quartiers de St. Just et St. Irenée, forwarded a petition to Premier Combes which represented the religious as contemplatives and therefore deserving of exemption from the enactment. All their efforts proving futile, the community prepared to comply with the demand.

The news of the decree of eviction and banishment elicited the deepest sympathy from all the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in America. Not satisfied with merely expressing her feelings, Reverend Mother Madeleine, who had always maintained the tenderest devotion for the religious of the Monastery of Lyons, sent Mother Alphonse and Sister Gabriel to Europe with instructions to render to the stricken community every possible aid. Arriving at their destination eighteen days before the date set by the government for the eviction of the nuns they found to their disappointment that there was little for them to accomplish. Hoping that the authorities would relent or that time would soften the opposition of the Radical party, the religious had decided to remain as near France as possible, and, therefore, gently declined the offer of a home in Texas. They chose Fribourg, Switzerland, instead, and to this land of exile the Sisters in groups of twos and threes departed. It was indeed a time of sorrow, but the sympathy and loyalty of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word greatly consoled the victims of religious persecution while they in their turn edified the visitors by their resignation and patience. Even in the midst of the worries and trials which preceded their departure the Rule was observed in its minutest detail.

The confiscation of the monastery and its property was set for October 4, 1904. On that day the few remaining Sisters attended the last Mass said in their chapel by Reverend J. Millet, who during the past seventeen years had been their chaplain. Hardly had the Holy Sacrifice ended when the officers summoned Reverend Mother St. Pierre, the Superioress, and read to her the order of the government. With a heavy heart she and her Sisters set out upon their journey, kneeling as they crossed the threshold of the convent to receive the blessing of their chaplain, who, crushed

by the blow which had fallen on his spiritual daughters, survived their departure but three months.

True to their trust, Mother Alphonse and Sister Gabriel stayed to the end; they accompanied the travelers to the depot, from whence they saw them depart and then returned to lock the monastery. What memories that old building must have awakened! There the Texas Congregation had its origin, there Reverend Mother St. Pierre and Reverend Mother Madeleine received their religious training, and from there the former took her peaceful flight to Heaven. Sorrowfully they closed the great door of the cloister and confided the key to the gardener whom the French government had made custodian of the confiscated property. A sisterly welcome was accorded them by Mother Antonie of the Congregation of St. Joseph with whom they remained until arrangements for a visit to Switzerland were completed. In November Mother Alphonse and Sister Gabriel traveled to Fribourg where they found the religious located in a summer chateau.

Although granted permission to dwell within the Swiss boundaries, the Sisters, fearful of opposition, had put aside their religious habit. They soon realized that such precaution was useless, for indifference, not opposition was to be their lot. No one seemed to care what became of them, not even the clergy who maintained a rigid aloofness to all that concerned their welfare. After doing what lay in their power to lighten the burden of the exiles, Mother Alphonse and Sister Gabriel prepared for their return voyage to the United States. In the midst of their arrangements they received a message from the Motherhouse advising them to proceed to Rome in the interest of the Constitutions.

Although the Community, thus far diocesan, had been favored by the good will and cooperation of the Bishops, the Sisters desired a closer union with the Holy See. In their purpose they were strongly supported by Bishop Forest who considered the time opportune for such negotiations. In the eyes of this worthy prelate a Congregation whose Rule is approved and sanctioned by the Holy See is doubly blessed; not only is a more sacred char-

acter conferred upon its Constitutions but the society as a whole becomes united, immutable, independent. Desirous that these advantages be enjoyed by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Bishop Forest urged the necessity of immediate action.

The presence of Mother Alphonse and Sister Gabriel in France facilitated the move since, with the assistance of the religious of the Incarnate Word, the Constitutions could be readily translated into French. Moreover, their nearness to Rome made less difficult their communications with the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. The plan of the Bishop won the support of Reverend Mother Madeleine and her Council, who immediately informed Mother Alphonse of their desires. In the absence of Sister Gabriel, Secretary-General of the Community, the work of correspondence fell to Mother Mary John who, considering this a labor of love, was tireless in her efforts to bring all to a successful issue. So quickly and effectively did all things work towards the end in view, that Mother Alphonse and her companion were ready to leave for Rome on January 22. They were provided with a copy of the Constitutions and the commendatory letters addressed to the Holy See by Archbishop Glennon of St. Louis, Archbishop Zubiria of Durango, Bishop Forest of San Antonio, Bishop Dunne of Dallas, Bishop Hogan of Kansas City, Bishop Fitzgerald of Little Rock, Bishop Gavilan of Chihuahua, Bishop Valdespino of Sonora, Bishop Fierro of Tamaulipas, Bishop Verdiguer of Brownsville; and by priests of various Religious Orders.[2]

The Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Mary, at that time stationed in Rome, as well as other friends to whom the Sisters were introduced, rendered valuable services. Personal letters to Cardinal Vives from his friend the Archbishop of Durango secured the interest of that prelate, and Cardinal Satolli was particularly kind and gracious. As a result of the investigations which followed the petition, the following Decree of Commendation, or Decree of Praise, was issued:

[2] Copies of these letters are preserved in the *Archives at the Motherhouse.*

"The Superioress General of the Institution of the Charity of the Incarnate Word, whose Motherhouse is in the diocese of San Antonio, in the United States of North America, having earnestly solicited that the Holy See should deign to approve the said Institute and its Constitutions, her petition was referred to the Roman Commission depending on this Sacred Congregation, over which His Eminence Cardinal Satolli presided. The most esteemed Roman Commission having ascertained that the said Institute has been of great utility in the missions of the aforesaid country, which is attested by the letters of the Ordinary of the Dioceses wherein the Sisters have establishments, judges that for the present the said Institute is worthy of praise; hoping that it may make such progress that in due time it may be able to secure the Approbation of the Holy See it has decreed that the Constitutions (introducing into them, however, the modifications indicated in the accompanying copy) should be approved by way of trial for five years.

This decision of the Roman Commission was presented to His Holiness, Pope Pius X, by the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, in an audience given on the 25th of April; his Holiness has deigned to confirm and ratify it, and ordered in person that this decree be granted.

Given at Rome from the College of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, the 26th of April, 1905.

Signed: Fr. H. M. Card. Gotti, Prefect,
Louis Veccia, Secretary." [3]

The reception of the Decree was immediately communicated to the Motherhouse, where the first formal recognition by the Holy See, justly esteemed a high and holy privilege, became an incentive to greater zeal and to more fervent gratitude for God's care. In the interval of their stay in Rome Mother Alphonse and Sister Gabriel obtained among other favors the privilege of three hundred days' indulgence for a visit to the grotto, which had been erected on the Motherhouse grounds. They also had the happiness of having an audience with the Holy Father, and on the feast of St. Joseph assisted at his Mass, during which they received Holy Communion from his hand. Later they were present at the dedication of the Grotto of Lourdes in the Vatican Gardens, where they again saw His Holiness and received his blessing.

[3] Original Latin decree in the *Archives at the Motherhouse.*

The two travelers, starting for home on May 20, arrived in San Antonio ten days later. Accompanying them were two aged religious, Sister Marie de Jesus and Sister Marie Josephine of the Order of the Incarnate Word in Azerables, who, fearing to be secularized if they remained in France requested the favor of being received as guests of the community in San Antonio. Reverend Mother Madeleine gladly consented and a warm welcome was accorded them on their arrival at the Motherhouse. Although not members by right of the Community, they took part in all the religious exercises and wore the habit of a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word. After a few months Sister Marie de Jesus entered a house of her Order in Mexico, but Sister Marie Josephine remained at Alamo Heights until her death, September 8, 1908.

The time immediately following the arrival of Mother Alphonse and Sister Gabriel was spent in translating the text of the Constitutions in order that the Rule might be placed in the hands of the individual Sisters. While a few changes were required by the Holy See and new articles were inserted, there was no alteration in the spirit and practice of the Congregation. One regulation affected the administrative body since it stipulated that the Mistress of Novices and the Treasurer could not be members of the General Council. As Mother Mary John and Mother Alexis held these respective offices they were retained in the Council and Mother Loyola and Sister Felicitas were appointed to complete their unexpired terms. At the same time the temporary professed Sisters, who until then were members of the novitiate, were separated from the novices; in accordance with the provision that the Motherhouse have its own local Superioress, Mother Alphonse received the appointment.

Five years passed quickly and the prayers of the Sisters which had been offered for the favor conferred in 1905 were redoubled in order that the hope inspired by the Decree of Praise might be realized. The year 1910 found Reverend Mother Alphonse [4] and

[4] In the inferval Reverend Mother Alphonse had been elected to the office of Superioress General; the General Chapter held in 1909 had decreed that

Mother Gabriel again in Rome, where they were graciously received by His Eminence Cardinal Vives, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious. The Cardinal remembered having met the Mothers in 1905 and kindly inquired concerning the progress made by the Congregation. To the great joy of the Sisters the work of examining and revising the Constitutions occasioned little delay. The private audience with our Holy Father lasted a quarter of an hour during which both Mothers were deeply impressed by the graciousness of His Holiness and the interest with which he listened to their requests. His encouraging words made them hope for the successful termination of their cause.

While Reverend Mother Alphonse and Mother Gabriel waited and prayed in Rome, the members of the Congregation united their petition to those of the absent missionaries and all eagerly desired results. Happiness prevailed at the Convent on Alamo Heights when a cable message was received announcing that Pius X had, on April 5, given his approval to the Congregation. His Eminence Cardinal Satolli was appointed first Cardinal Protector and the following Decree was issued:

All things having been duly examined, and the commendatory letters of the R. R. Ordinaries taken into consideration, the Sacred Congregation of Religious in its sessions of the 17th day of March, 1910, deigned to grant to the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, whose Motherhouse is in the city of San Antonio, Texas, in the United States of North America, the final approbation of the Institute, and also of the Constitutions such as are contained in this authentic copy, written in French. . . . Our most Holy Father, Pius X, graciously deigned to ratify and confirm this favor, in an audience granted on the 5th day of April, to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the aforesaid Sacred Congregation.

Rome, from the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation of Religious on the 20th day of April, 1910.

Fr. J. C. Vives, Prefect.
F. Cherubini, Sub-Secretary.

Shortly after the cable announcement Reverend Mother Alphonse addressed the following letter to the Congregation:

the title "Mother" be accorded all members of the Generalate and all local Superiors.

*Dearly beloved Sisters:*

May the adorable Word Incarnate be forever praised for the manifold favors He confers on us, His humble daughters and spouses.

When we announced to you, dear Sisters, our voyage to Rome at the beginning of February, we did not think that we should have the consolation of so soon communicating to you the joyful tidings of the accomplishment of our mission. The Incarnate Word has indeed taken special care of the interests of our dear Congregation, and has mercifully deigned to grant our humble supplication.

As you are aware, dear Sisters, we arrived here on February twenty-first. After making our preliminary visits and arrangements, we presented our Constitutions and accompanying documents to the Sacred Congregation of Religious, on March first, under the protection of St. Joseph. On April 15, the Cardinal Prefect presented the report of the Congregation to our most Holy Father, Pius X, who graciously granted the desire of our hearts; namely, the final approbation of our Constitutions. On that day we were returning from our pilgrimage to the Holy House of Loretto, where we spent the feast of the Annunciation, kept this year on April 4th.

The glad tidings of the favorable decision were communicated to us on Wednesday, April 6th, at six o'clock. We feel certain that many fervent hymns of praise were offered to the Incarnate Word by all the members of our religious family.

In gratitude for this inestimable blessing which is to impart new spiritual life to our Congregation, we desire that a Mass of thanksgiving be celebrated and the Te Deum and the Magnificat be recited or sung in each community as soon as possible after the reception of this letter.

We hope to receive the official copy of the Constitutions from the Sacred Congregation in a few days; then we shall have the books printed at the Vatican. This of course will take time. From here we shall go to France and then to Switzerland to visit our dear Mothers of Lyons. When at home we shall be glad to give you more particulars concerning our mission and the friends whom Our Divine Lord sent to help us in the work.[5]

Reverend Mother and her companion reached the Motherhouse on June 24, where the Community, gathered in the chapel, greeted them with that joyful hymn of praise and thanksgiving, the "Magnificat." It was a memorable event for the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, who rejoiced that the work unpretentiously begun just forty-one years ago had found recognition with

[5] *Letter dated April* 15, 1910, *Rome.*

the head of Christendom. The name of Pius X has since been held in special veneration by the Congregation.

The translation of the Constitutions from French into English was accomplished by Reverend J. P. Canning, S. M.; and on December 3, the anniversary of the foundation Mass, Bishop Shaw, later Archbishop of New Orleans, affixed to it his Imprimatur. While this happy coincidence recalled the memories of those venerated Mothers who spent their lives in promoting the interests of the Congregation, it also animated the present generation to glory in the honor of following in their footsteps as true daughters of the Incarnate Word.

## CHAPTER XI.

Death of Reverend Mother M. Madeleine.—Reverend Mother Alphonse, Superioress General.

1906—1912.

In 1905 three Sisters, with Sister Cleophas as Superioress, were sent from San Antonio to take charge of Spohn Sanitarium, Corpus Christi, Texas. This hospital had been erected by the citizens, the greater part of whom were non-Catholics, on a tract of land donated for the purpose by Doctor Spohn, a prominent physician of the locality. In the contract made by the citizens, the owner of the land had retained the right to dispose of the entire property as he saw fit; he now offered the hospital to Bishop Verdiguer, the Vicar Apostolic of Brownsville, who invited Reverend Mother Madeleine to accept the Sanitarium on condition that the building should always be used for hospital purposes and that the hospital should bear the doctor's name. Reverend Mother Madeleine accepted the offer and the deeds of transfer were signed.

On July 26, the feast of St. Ann, Spohn Sanitarium was blessed by Bishop Verdiguer; and the day following the first Mass was celebrated by Father C. Jaillet, the newly appointed chaplain. As the large number of patients who applied for admission to the seaside Sanitarium could not be accommodated, the Sisters, encouraged by the cooperation of the people of Corpus Christi, and the interest the doctors manifested in the institution, undertook the erection of a larger and more modern building. Situated on the beach and sufficiently removed from neighboring residences to secure quiet and privacy, the hospital was an ideal resort not only for the patients but likewise for the Sisters. As the yearly vacation approached, each Sister felt a secret longing to be among the fortunate ones sent for a week's rest to Corpus Christi, where the kindness and consideration of the Sister nurses made the holi-

days memorable. Neatly equipped and enlarged from time to time, Spohn Sanitarium continued its mission of charity, until the storm of 1919 which wrought such havoc along the Texas coast, brought its career to a sudden close.

The gradually attained prosperity of the hospitals conducted by the Congregation was due to the thoroughness and industry of the Superiors who, directed by Reverend Mother Madeleine, looked beyond the physical development and improvement of the institutions. For Reverend Mother a nurse signified one who had received a systematic and theoretical course of training; consequently, it became necessary to add to the various hospitals, regularly organized training-schools wherein the future nurses could be instructed. As these schools increased in numbers and importance, provisions were made for the admission of young ladies who wished to follow the profession.

Santa Rosa Infirmary, the first to comply with Reverend Mother Madeleine's desire, opened a training-school in 1903 with a teaching staff composed of the following: Doctors Ferdinand Herff, J. Braunagel, H. D. Barnitz, James H. Bell, Adolph Herff, W. D. McCarthy, J. P. Oldham, A. S. McDaniel, J. H. Bindley, and William Wolf.

Two years later when Bishop Forest presided at the exercises held in honor of the first graduating class, Dr. Herff, dean of the faculty, gave diplomas to Sister Colette, Sister de Sales, Sister Eleanor, Sister Everistus, Sister Victor, Sister Philip Neri, Sister Malachy, Sister Mary of the Ascension, Sister Robert, Sister Stella, Sister Timothy, Sister Austin, and Sister Anselm.

A copy of the address delivered by Doctor Herff who had identified himself with Santa Rosa from the days of its foundation, has been preserved in the archives:

"Over thirty-five years ago the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word undertook the difficult task of building a hospital for the treatment of medical and surgical diseases. At that time our town, although a celebrated health resort, was a most unsanitary place, as far as the supply of drinking water, drainage, and sewerage was concerned.

There were no proper facilities for the sick, and no accommodation whatever for patients who came from the surrounding country for medical treatment. Our hotels and private boarding houses were equally unsanitary, and many patients were compelled to resign themselves to the deplorable conditions of such lodgings.

There were some weak attempts at private sanitariums, but these were not conducted in a manner to afford comfort to the sick, and were consequently abandoned by their owners as worthless investments. The county and city hospitals labored under the same disadvantages, and the very few nurses we had, were mostly colored women without proper training. On many occasions I had to perform operations of a serious nature on the streets or under the shade of a tree, because of the lack of light and ventilation in the hotels in which my patients were compelled to stay.

The Santa Rosa began its operations on an exceedingly small scale in an old house, very scantily furnished, and with only a few inexperienced Sisters as nurses. They were, however, endowed with a sense of duty, strengthened by religious zeal; and in a spirit of complete self-denial which ever characterized their efforts, they applied themselves to unremitting labors. It was not long before their endeavors bore fruit. A new site—the present one—was chosen for the hospital, and with the aid of better sanitary conditions, through the introduction of drainage, sewerage, and water system in the city, this hospital passed from its experimental stage and is now a success. The buildings were added to, until they now represent the best equipped hospital in the State of Texas.

You have here a good drug store presided over by a competent pharmacist; a resident physician whose duty it is to answer at all times any emergency case that may arise. All the corridors and rooms are lined with glazed tiling; the wards are spacious, well ventilated, heated in winter, and furnished throughout with clean and comfortable beds. The spirit of cleanliness which is next to Godliness is ever present in this house. . . . Every thing is arranged on the latest hygenic principles. The Sisters are now all trained nurses and have attended the lectures of some of the most eminent physicians and surgeons in this country. Words are inadequate to describe the self-sacrificing and untiring labor that these Sisters are daily and nightly expending on suffering humanity; one can realize the full import of these duties only by coming in contact with them as we physicians do. The thanks of this community are due the promoters of this hospital, to clerics as well as to laymen, but more especially to the dear Sisters who have the most difficult tasks to perform without gain or worldly distinction. It is to them we give our most hearty thanks." [1]

The year that witnessed the first graduating exercises at Santa

[1] *Archives at the Motherhouse, San Antonio.*

Rosa records the opening of the Sisters' Infirmary in the new building adjoining the chapel. Sister Martin, the first infirmarian, was later called to the Motherhouse to take care of the chapel; devotion to duty and an utter disregard for her own convenience brought her to an early grave to the deep regret of those who had experienced her gentle and sisterly care. The Santa Rosa Infirmary is especially dear to all the members of the Congregation, who welcome every opportunity of visiting the sick Sisters. Since the death of Sister Pachomius, who was the first patient of the infirmary, many have answered the summons to eternity, their peaceful and edifying deaths making it the abode of sacred memories.

Like her predecessor in office Reverend Mother Madeleine took a deep interest in the Community's activities in Mexico. In the early part of 1906 Bishop J. M. Echavarria of Saltillo requested her to send a community to Torreon. Sister Casimir and three Sisters who went in response to the invitation taught in a small rented house until 1908 when Colegio Jesu Maria, a handsome, brick building erected by the Community, was opened for boarding and day pupils. The long series of political disturbances that agitated the country five years later, did not interfere to any appreciable extent with the school. For some time the pupils were not many but their number was sufficient to justify the Sisters in continuing their classes. The frequent attempts made by the revolutionary parties to seize the building were met by energetic resistance on the part of Sister Casimir and her devoted companion, Sister Rosalie; through their untiring vigilance and perseverance they saved the property from confiscation. In 1913 the Bishop annexed to the academy a gratuitous school for poor children.

Simultaneously with the request for the opening of Colegio Jesu Maria came another from the same source for the acceptance of Colegio del Corazon de Maria in the town of General Cepeda. This appeal was answered by sending four Sisters of whom Sister Eustace was the Superioress. The school existed for six years

when, owing to an insufficient number of pupils, the community was withdrawn in January, 1912.

A more fortunate career awaited the English Academy of the Incarnate Word opened in Mexico City. Sister Angelique, the Superioress, and her three assistants conducted their classes in a rented house in Calle Perpetua until the increasing number of pupils required them to seek a larger building. In December 1906, a residence located in Colonia Santa Maria was purchased from Senora Degollado, a former lady-in-waiting to the unfortunate Empress Carlotta. The terms included the payment of a sixteen thousand dollar mortgage and a monthly rent of two hundred and fifty dollars, during the lifetime of the Senora and that of her husband. While the political conflict in Mexico did not injure the school, the difficulty experienced in procuring the monthly payments occasioned fears for its success. During the first three years of the revolution the depreciated Mexican currency placed a severe strain on the resources of the community; fortunately this crisis passed and the English Academy of the Incarnate Word has at present a daily attendance of two hundred and fifty pupils.

In September, 1906, Bishop E. J. Dunne of Dallas blessed All Saints' Academy, Rosen Heights, Fort Worth, Texas, which Sister Christina and her three companions opened that same autumn. Although built for the purpose of a boarding and day school, its inconvenient location has made All Saints' Academy almost exclusively a boarding school.

The last important work undertaken by Reverend Mother Madeleine was the erection of the Community chapel on Alamo Heights. With the assistance of Father Bednarek the preliminary plans were drawn, and the architect, Mr. Fred Gaenslen, was engaged; the feast of the Epiphany was appointed for the blessing and breaking of ground.

"January 6, 1906, was a glorious day," wrote the Annalist, "one of those regular spring days which have made Texas famous as the 'Garden of the South.'" Sisters, pupils, and friends gath-

ered on the grounds in front of the Motherhouse to witness the beginning of the edifice destined to be the crowning achievement of Reverend Mother Madeleine's thirty-seven years of love and labor. Bishop Forest, who was present for the ceremonies, addressed a few words of congratulation to the Community; then, assisted by Father Bednarek and Father Schneider, proceeded to bless the ground.

For some days there was apprehension lest Father Bednarek, who was suffering intensely, and whose strength disease was rapidly undermining, would be prevented from attending the ceremony. With his usual enthusiasm he had offered to supervise the construction of the chapel which, with Mother Madeleine, he wished to make a veritable "House of God and Gate of Heaven." He had guided the architect in every line of the preliminaries; he had given his attention to the minutest detail, and he longed to see the plans concretized. This, however, was not to be. In designing the chapel he had performed his last service for the Congregation; just thirteen days after breaking ground he passed to his eternal reward. A few moments before breathing his last he requested Sister Seraphim, who had faithfully attended him during his last illness, to raise his hand: "This is a dying priest's blessing," he said. "May God bless our dear Reverend Mother Madeleine and all the Sisters who have been so good to me."

In Father Bednarek's death, which was an echo of his priestly life, the Sisters lost a valued friend. Not alone in material affairs did he further the interests of the Congregation; his accomplishments as a scholar were highly appreciated by the directors of the Normal School, who had confided to his care the classes in Latin and mathematics; for a while he taught in the Academy, where he won the esteem and reverence of the students, and frequently Reverend Mother Madeleine invited him to give conferences to the community. After the solemn Requiem Mass sung in the Santa Rosa Chapel, the remains of Father Bednarek, accompanied by his mother, were taken to his home in Chicago.

All the Sisters hoped that the chapel and the addition which

connected it with the main building of the Motherhouse would be completed before the end of vacation; however, owing to the difficulty experienced in securing the desired material, the dedication was delayed until May 30, 1907. On that occasion the magnificent structure in Romanesque style, "the true architecture of the cloister,"[2] was dedicated to Divine worship.

The ceremonies, performed by Bishop Forest, were attended by Bishop E. J. Dunne of Dallas, Bishop Verdiguer of Brownsville, by numerous priests and other friends of the Community. The Brothers from St. Mary's and St. Louis' College, under the direction of Professor Steinfeldt, "sang the Mass of the Blessed Virgin in pure Gregorian Chant, and sang it admirably."

"The sanctuary presented a spectacle of rare beauty—the white marble altar, with its glittering crucifix and candelabra of gilt metal and onyx; the episcopal throne draped in crimson velvet; the chairs of state on either side, occupied by purpled-robed Bishops; the long array of surpliced priests at the chancel rail—all these combined to form a picture of soul-stirring grandeur and solemnity. . . . The brilliant stained-glass windows lit the whole with a flood of rich and variegated color, amid which the effigies of the Saints of old seemed to look down with approbation upon a scene worthy of the ages of faith.

The new edifice is of cathedral-like proportions, and in beauty of design is unexcelled, if equalled, by any church edifice in the South. It is 120 feet in length, exclusive of the spacious sanctuary, and 68 feet in width; built of red brick, with white stone facings. At the main entrance on the west is a massive tower surmounted by a steeple, bearing on the pinnacle the gilded emblem of redemption.

The chapel is approached from without by a broad stone stair way, leading to the entrance of stone and granite. Massive double doors of oak open upon a wide corridor, which connects the chapel with the academy portion of the building.

The view of the interior from the main doorway is one of exquisite beauty; fourteen columns of scagliola, with gilded Romanesque capitals, support the lofty ceiling of embossed metal. Fourteen stained glass windows, every one a gem of art, shed a mellow light over the whole. Round the rear wall of the sanctuary runs a scroll bearing the legend: O Mysterium Ineffabile, O Charitatis Sacramentum Admirabile, Hic Est Panis Vitae. Hic Est Cibus Animae. The crowning feature of all is the

[2] HUYSMANS, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

superb altar of Carrara marble with onyx columns, in the center of which, above the tabernacle, stands a marble statue of the Incarnate Word. Marble altars, one of the Blessed Virgin and one of St. Joseph are on each side of the sanctuary; and four niches, two on each side of the main altar contain the statues of four founders of religious Orders: St. Benedict, St. Francis, St. Dominic and St. Ignatius.[3]

Truly the architect's skill, the painter's art, and the weaver's deftness had been employed in making the dwelling of the Eucharistic Emmanuel a veritable "House of God and a Gate of Heaven."[4]

With the deepest interest Reverend Mother Madeleine had watched the rise of the stately and elegant edifice. Her thoughts had, doubtless, reverted frequently to that first St. Francis Xavier's day when, in the bare little Santa Rosa Chapel, three Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word had dedicated their lives to the needy of San Antonio. God's blessing had rested on the labors of the foundresses, the sacrifices of whom had secured from His bounty the hundredfold even in this life.

As the work on the chapel advanced, it became evident to the Sisters that their Reverend Mother had not long to live. The malady which asserted itself early in 1905 had made such progress that all hope of a recovery was relinquished. When told of her condition, she quietly and cheerfully began to prepare for death, at the same time edifying all who visited her by the admirable patience with which she bore her intense sufferings. For each of her daughters she had a smile and an encouraging word, nor did she tire of urging them to give to God all the glory the Congregation had attained.

The solicitude of the Sisters for their Superioress was shared by the students of the Academy, who had grown to love and revere the gentle and kind religious. They missed the familiar figure they were accustomed to meet when they paid their evening visit to the grotto. Often Reverend Mother had been accompanied by

[3] *Southern Messenger*, June 7, 1907, San Antonio.

[4] KIENBERGER, V. F., *A Tribute* written on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the Congregation.

several of the orphans, for when unable to go to St. John's and St. Joseph's she had the children brought to Alamo Heights to visit her. As July of 1906 advanced, her sufferings increased. On the nineteenth of the month a special blessing was sent by the Holy Father, Pius X, which was intended as a name's day greeting, but Reverend Mother spent the feast of St. Madeleine in her eternal home to which she passed on the morning of the twentieth.

The solemn Requiem Mass on Saturday was celebrated at Santa Rosa by Reverend L. Schratz who had attended Reverend Mother during her last illness; Reverend Eichnor was the deacon of the Mass, Reverend Whalen was subdeacon and Reverend Schneider was master of ceremonies; Bishop Forest was present and gave the last absolution. After the ceremonies in the chapel were completed, the remains of Reverend Mother were borne to the San Fernando Cemetery, followed by her sorrowing Sisters, the students of the Academy, and the orphans of St. John's and St. Joseph's. The clergy and religious of the various orders of the city were represented at the funeral, and the expressions of sorrow which came from Europe and many parts of America revealed the high esteem entertained for this humble and zealous religious.

"Your loss is great," wrote Reverend Weckesser, "but there is no doubt that your gain is great as well. God is the Father of destinies. He has called her away and she will be a powerful intercessor in Heaven for your Community and all your works." [5]

Trials and contradictions by which the Divine Master tests the love of His servants and purifies their zeal had not been wanting in the life of Reverend Mother Madeleine; but her trust in God was firm and deep; from that fountain of strength she drew the grace of patient endurance through the years of hard struggle—years which insured the progress of today. To her zeal and courage, the Congregation owes an undying debt of gratitude.[6]

The editor of the Southern Messenger paid the following tribute to the beloved dead:

[5] *Archives at the Motherhouse.*
[6] *Annals of the Congregation.*

The death of Reverend Mother Madeleine, Superioress-General of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, of this city, is a distinct loss not only to the large Congregation of which she was so long the ruler and guide, but also to the religious life of the city and the diocese. In her early womanhood she consecrated her life to the service of God in the missions of Texas, and for nearly forty years she labored humbly and zealously in the cause of religion and charity, until it pleased her Divine Master and Spouse to summon her to her eternal home.

Surveying the brief and simple record of her life, one is struck by the wonderful success which followed her footsteps. With but two companions, she established in 1869 the first house of her Congregation in this city. To-day the same Congregation is composed of four hundred and fifty-two members distributed in fourteen dioceses and in fifty establishments. They conduct thirty-four academies and schools, twelve hospitals, two orphan asylums, and two homes for the aged. Most truly can we say that her work lives after her. . . .

Her humility and devout piety were sources of inspiration and edification to her Sisters in religion and to all who knew her. Although we can never know the full number of souls helped by her, yet all who had the privilege of her friendship, or came within the circle of her acquaintance, are the better for her influence and example. Her memory will be held in grateful reverence not only by her associates in religion, but by all who had the happiness of knowing her. May her soul rest in peace.[7]

A few months before her death Reverend Mother Madeleine had convoked a Business Chapter, the sessions of which were held on July 30. When the delegates assembled, the chapter of elections which took precedence chose her successor, Mother Alphonse, a religious who for twenty-eight years had been actively engaged in the works of the Congregation. A native of France, Mother Alphonse entered the Community in 1878, accompanied by Mother Ignatius. Her services in the hospitals were interrupted by her election to the office of Treasurer, a position she held until appointed Superioress of the Missouri-Pacific Hospital in St. Louis. Five years later Mother Alphonse was recalled to the Motherhouse, where she acted in the capacity of assistant to Reverend Mother Madeleine; with the formation of the Generalate in 1895 she became the first Assistant General of the Congregation,

[7] *Southern Messenger*, July 26, 1906.

an office she filled until the vote of the Chapter of 1906 made her Superioress-General. Qualified by experience and ability, Reverend Mother Alphonse was admirably fitted to strengthen the works established by her predecessors in office. Although closely connected with the hospital work of the Congregation, she was actively interested in the development of the schools, the number of which greatly increased during her two administrations.

In the government of the Congregation Reverend Mother was ably assisted by Mother Mary John; her Consulters were: Sister St. John, Sister Alexis, Sister Bonaventure, Sister Michael, and Sister Gabriel; the last occupied the office of Secretary, and Sister Colette was Treasurer. Thus, only two changes were produced by the elections. However, if Sister Bonaventure and Sister Colette had not heretofore engaged in the general administration of the Congregation, they, nevertheless, brought to their offices rich experience and sound ability.

Shortly after the adjournment of the General Chapter Reverend Mother Alphonse and her Council accepted an invitation from Bishop E. J. Dunne to take charge of the diocesan orphanage of Dallas. The community of five Sisters with Sister Cesarius, Superioress, had soon to be increased owing to the large number of boys and girls admitted to St. Joseph's. The building, a simple frame structure, was the source of serious inconveniences, which the Sisters endured until 1917, when Bishop Lynch, the successor of Bishop Dunne, remodeled the residence of his predecessor and converted it into the Dunne Industrial Home. On July 8, the new orphanage was blessed and a few days later the boys were transferred to their quarters. For some time the two institutions were under the same Superior; eventually it became necessary to establish separate communities. Ten Sisters were assigned to the girls' orphanage and the number in charge of the Dunne Industrial Home has been increased to nine.

After the introduction of the Community into Dallas, Reverend Mother Alphonse sent Sisters to Liberty Hill, Texas; to Wilburton, and to Hartshorn, Oklahoma. The history of pioneer days was

rehearsed in the opening of these schools, all of which were closed before 1918.

The Community Annals for 1910, which happily record the Papal Approbation of the Constitutions, likewise make mention of the reception of Bishop J. W. Shaw, the lately appointed coadjutor Bishop of the San Antonio diocese. For some years previous to this event Bishop Forest, whose health was rapidly failing, realized that he was unable to support alone the burdens of his office. In reply to his request for a Coadjutor, Rome, on February 7, 1910, appointed the chancellor of the diocese of Mobile who was consecrated titular bishop of Castabela and Coadjutor of the diocese of San Antonio. The entrance into the city of the lately consecrated Bishop was a memorable event, the most elaborate preparations having been made by Bishop Forest who received his assistant at the door of the unique San Fernando Cathedral. As the procession, composed of the clergy, the societies of the diocese, and the school children of the city, turned towards the City Hall in its march to the Cathedral, it passed between two long lines of students from Our Lady of the Lake College and the Incarnate Word College, each body wearing its distinctive uniform. The quick eye of Bishop Shaw noted the situation at once and he commented on the pleasure it afforded him of passing through the ranks of the blue and the gray. At the close of the greetings the coadjutor Bishop repaired to the Santa Rosa Hospital where for the past two years Bishop Forest had been residing.

One of the first official acts of Bishop Shaw was to administer Confirmation to a class of fifteen pupils belonging to the Academy of the Incarnate Word. On that occasion, the feast of the Sacred Heart, he celebrated Mass in the Convent chapel. His simple but forceful sermon went straight to the hearts of his hearers and won for him the reverence of every student of the institution, a reverence which time has but intensified. Honored by all, Bishop Shaw entered upon his new duties: "Wise in counsel, prudent in action, zealous in effort, and true in every impulse of his noble

nature,"[8] he was a friend and helper of the venerable Bishop whose strength was rapidly failing. Towards the early part of 1911 it became evident that Bishop Forest was near his end. A stroke of paralysis in February dispelled all hopes of a recovery, but he lingered until March 11, when he passed quietly and peacefully away while Father W. W. Hume was celebrating Mass for him in an adjoining room of the Santa Rosa.

At once the hospital became a scene of sorrow. A large hall on the ground floor was converted into a mortuary chapel; the walls were draped with black, and an altar was erected. There the remains reposed in state from Saturday until Tuesday, when they were conveyed to the Cathedral. Mass was celebrated daily in the temporary chapel and every evening the office of the dead was recited by the priests of the city.

During the day Sisters from the various congregations watched and prayed beside the remains; on Sunday, the Sisters of Divine Providence; on Monday, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word; on Tuesday, the Ursulines, the Teresians, and the Sisters of the Holy Ghost. Each day a guard of honor composed of the Knights of Columbus was on duty, while during the nights delegations from the other societies of men kept watch. Crowds of the faithful and many persons of other creeds thronged the chapel to pay their respects to the deceased Bishop. The solemn Pontifical Mass of Requiem was celebrated by Bishop Shaw in San Fernando's Cathedral; and the sermon was preached by Right Reverend J. B. Morris of Little Rock. With all ecclesiastical and military honors Bishop Forest was laid to rest in the old San Fernando Cemetery; his memory will long be held in benediction by those who were privileged to know him, and his name is destined to occupy a place of distinction beside those of Archbishop Odin, Bishop Dubuis, Bishop Pellicer, and Bishop Neraz.

For the sake of convenience Bishop Shaw installed his chancery office in the Santa Rosa, and made the chaplain's residence at

[8] *Morning Star*, Christmas number, 1915.

Alamo Heights his home. That same reciprocity of service between bishops and religious, which had made success possible in the early days, characterized the relations of the new Ordinary and the Community. Every enterprise secured his interest and he strongly advocated the founding of parochial schools. When the Catholic University opened its doors to the Sisters, Bishop Shaw sanctioned Reverend Mother's proposal to send three teachers to the first summer session. That autumn Sister Columkille and Sister Madeleine remained in Washington to attend the Catholic Sisters College which was formally opened in October. Both received their degrees, and their places were taken by other members of the Congregation. With the exception of the year 1917, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word have been in continuous attendance at the Sisters College.

Bishop Shaw's interest in the hospital work of the Community was equally sincere. On November 21, 1910, he dedicated the new hospital built in San Angelo, Texas, and called St. John's Sanitarium in honor of Bishop Forest. For some years the people of this western city had been urging Reverend Mother to undertake the work, towards which they voluntarily contributed fifteen thousand dollars. The building, a handsome brick structure, erected on a hill three miles distant from San Angelo, had been well planned and completely equipped for a limited number of patients. After the blessing and formal opening, Sister de Sales and her three companions took charge of St. John's which soon enjoyed the esteem and patronage of the doctors of the county. In December the training-school which was added to the hospital, admitted its first pupil, Miss Ethel Reiley, who later became Sister Mary Roberta. In less than seven years the great number of cases required the installation of a pathological laboratory and X-ray, with a Sister technician in charge; from the initial number of three the community has been augmented to eleven.

In view of the fact that many subjects came to the Congregation from various sections of Europe, the delegates to the General Chapter of 1909 had discussed the advisability of opening a postu-

late in Europe where the candidate would be given the opportunity of testing her vocation before asking admission to the novitiate at Alamo Heights. As all the delegates favored the proposition, Reverend Mother Alphonse and Mother Gabriel had, during their interview with Pope Pius X in 1910, placed the matter before His Holiness who personally granted the desired permission. In October Sister Athanasius and Sister Frederica were sent to Europe to investigate conditions.

Apparently unsuccessful in their travels through Germany, Belgium, and Luxemburg, the Sisters, with a feeling of disappointment, turned to Holland where they were welcomed by the Archbishop of Utrecht, Monseigneur Wetering. At his suggestion they made arrangements to establish a house at Zevenaar, a Catholic locality near the German border. Through the advice of friends, among whom were the Capuchin Fathers of Babberich, the Community purchased a house in Oud Zevenaar, a suburb of the city. Villa Maria, as the convent was called, was on the principal street of the village, a large garden containing many fruit trees adjoined the house, and in time, the Sisters had a neatly cultivated garden. In September 1911, Sister Mary of Calvary, who had been appointed Mistress of the postulants, arrived from San Antonio. Candidates were admitted at once and in the summer Sister Athanasius, the Superioress, accompanied nine young ladies who had completed their probationary term to the novitiate in San Antonio. Sister Athanasius was replaced in office by Sister Mary of Calvary. Finding the convent too small to accommodate the candidates Reverend Mother Alphonse who visited Holland in 1913, recommended the purchase of a larger and more convenient house. The outbreak of the World War delayed this change until 1918, when St. Mary's Convent was secured. During this stage of their experience the Sisters realized the kindness Providence had shown in guiding them to Holland rather than to some locality then engaged in direful strife. Though not near the scenes of hostility, they were obliged to endure numerous privations during the four years of warfare.

The object of Reverend Mother Alphonse's special love and care, St. Mary's continued its mission. In 1922 Mother Adelberta replaced Mother Mary of Calvary; a religious of remarkable piety and discretion she encouraged vocations and watched diligently over the training of the young members into whose minds and hearts she endeavored to instil a sincere desire to promote the glory of the Incarnate Word. Her death in 1924 deprived the Congregation of one of its most loyal and devoted subjects.

## CHAPTER XII.

### Administration of Reverend Mother Alphonse. Fire at St. John's Orphanage. 1912—1918.

Reverend Mother Alphonse was re-elected by the General Chapter of 1912; serving with her as her Council were Mother Mary John, Assistant-General, Mother Alexis, Mother St. John, Mother Bonaventure, Mother Briget, and Mother Wendelinus; Mother Colette was the Treasurer.

For the first time in nineteen years Mother Gabriel was missing from the Generalate. Her death had occurred on August 24, 1911, and the duties of Secretary performed by her from 1884 to 1890, and again from 1892 to 1911, were now confided to the care of Mother Bonaventure. Shortly after returning from Europe in 1911 Mother Gabriel had, as the result of a fall experienced during her travels, shown evidences of failing health. Her interest in the schools did not relax until August 7 of the following year when, having completed the "mission lists" for the coming scholastic session, she yielded to the wish of Reverend Mother Alphonse and went to the Santa Rosa Infirmary. Convinced that the end was near she received the last rites of the Church on August 18, after which she lingered for six days visited frequently by the Sisters who came to say their last farewell before departing for their missions.

The solemn Requiem Mass at which Bishop Shaw presided was attended by numerous friends of the Congregation, who realized that Mother Gabriel's death was a loss to society as well as to her religious family. Born and educated in the South, she understood the southern character thoroughly, and many young women today attribute their position in society to her influence and inspiration. Her keen foresight and grasp of detail enabled her to successfully

cope with difficult problems while her affability and courtesy won the love and confidence of every class. Always receptive, the young Sisters gave her their confidence, and her advice and ready sympathy helped to solve the problems of the schoolroom. The advanced teachers who gained by Mother Gabriel's experiences felt that her strict demands regarding class preparation and self-advancement were dictated by a heart that put duty before every consideration; and the Superiors with whom she cooperated appreciated her earnest faith, unselfish devotion to duty, and unflagging zeal in all that pertained to the welfare of the Congregation. Mother Gabriel left in the hearts of all who knew her, tender, sweet, and hallowed memories; memories of her great and lovable personality, of her simplicity, and her constant kindness to all.

The numerous obligations which devolved upon the Secretary-General, as a consequence of the increasing number of institutions confided to the care of the Congregation, made it advisable to divide the duties of Secretary and Inspectress of Schools between two persons. This change was effected in 1909, when Sister Columbanus was appointed to the latter position.

Following the reorganization of the Council the scholastic year of 1912 was signalized by the opening of several institutions; among these was Mount Carmel Academy at Fort Worth, which represents some of the Community's most industrious and constructive work in Texas. In 1910 Reverend Mother Alphonse had, at the request of Father J. Malone, opened a second school in All Saints' parish. The private residence which for two years served the purpose of a school soon became too small for the constantly increasing classes, and the Congregation constructed the present brick building on North Houston Street. The original Mt. Carmel School was then converted into San José School for the Mexican children of the district. The first community of the Academy consisted of Sister Bernadette and seven companions, whose happy inauguration has enabled the school to realize all the hopes of its founders. From a nominal enrollment the first year, the attendance has grown to two hundred.

Another institution accepted in the Dallas diocese was St. Joseph's Infirmary, Paris, Texas. Determined that this hospital which had been conducted by the Sisters of Mercy should not pass from under Catholic auspices, Bishop Lynch purchased the property and offered it for sale to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. The community of six Sister nurses, with Sister Helen the Superioress, soon found the patronage of St. Joseph's too large to be accommodated in the original building. The Superiors then undertook the construction of the present handsome fireproof hospital, the cornerstone of which was blessed by Bishop Lynch on August 10, 1913. Conducting its own training school for nurses, furnished with all the appliances that constitute a standardized hospital, and operating its own steam and electric plants, St. Joseph's Infirmary is a thoroughly scientific and modern institution. One of its unique features is its ivy-clad cobblestone chapel.

The former hospital building was removed to another part of the infirmary grounds, remodeled, and used for school purposes. Notre Dame Academy, as the institution was called, had to cope with bigotry and indifference until the disastrous fire of March 21, 1916, united all the citizens in a common bond of sympathy and interest. The following account was given the writer by members of the teaching staff of Notre Dame, stationed in Paris at the time of the disaster.

Shortly after Vespers on March 21, the Sisters who had assembled in the community room, noticed heavy black clouds of smoke rising above the windows on the second floor of the Academy. The wail of the siren and the rush of the fire brigade intimated that fire had broken out in some part of the city. But an investigation proved that it was only an ignited trash pile, the sparks of which, aided by the March winds, had been carried into a neighboring barn. In a short time sparks like balls of liquid fire were dropping here and there in the city; some traveling as far as the ball park, about six miles beyond the city limits.

We were not seriously alarmed until half past six in the evening

when the parents of our boarders, who called at the Academy, advised us to secure our valuables and leave the building before we were blockaded; the fire was then within ten blocks of us and making headway in our direction. This warning was followed by violent explosions of oil and gas tanks, by the crashing of falling walls, and cries of distress. Only then we realized the seriousness of the situation. The heat of the atmosphere was now so intense that window panes melted and our skin and clothing seemed parched.

Acting on the advice given, we filled all available utensils with water in order to extinguish the sparks which were falling on the roof and withered lawn. As the Blessed Sacrament was in the Academy we delayed leaving for St. Joseph's Infirmary until Father had removed the Sacred Species; at half-past one in the morning Mass was celebrated in the hospital chapel, during which the Sisters received Holy Communion.

Mother Robert, Superioress of St. Joseph's, opened the doors of the hospital to the stricken people. The community left nothing undone to render assistance to the unfortunates who now sought refuge among them, nor did they hesitate to go in the midst of flying sparks and heated atmosphere to answer emergency calls. Hearing that the fire chief and some of his men had been overpowered by the heat, Mother Robert, accompanied by a Sister, went immediately to their assistance.

Unable to check the progress of the fire, the city authorities of Paris appealed for aid to Dallas, Fort Worth, and Texarkana. Fire trucks and equipment were rushed to the scene, but it was not until the following evening that all danger was passed. Two buildings were left standing in the business section of the city—and seven hundred homes had been destroyed. The Church, rectory, infirmary, and the academy, which occupied a complete block, remained as a landmark in the midst of the ruins. Like a beacon light St. Joseph's, which had its own electric light plant, stood in the center of the darkened and desolate city. Not satisfied with feeding the hungry and harboring the homeless, the com-

munity turned every available space into offices. Parts of the second floor of the hospital were used by the doctors and dentists; the basement and fourth floor were placed at the disposal of the public school superintendent; and the academy building was offered to the mayor and the city commissioners; these gentlemen gladly accepted it in the name of the public school authorities, who continued classes in Notre Dame Academy until the close of the scholastic term. In recognition of these favors the superintendent presented the Sisters with a silver loving cup as a tribute of gratitude and appreciation.[1]

The years following the fire saw an appreciable increase in the daily attendance at Notre Dame. The cooperation and devotion of the pastor, Father Adams, has added to the prestige of the school and the Parent-Teachers' Association, established in 1923, is gaining for the Academy a liberal patronage from non-Catholics as well as Catholics.

Particularly fortunate was the new Notre Dame Academy, opened in Kerrville, Texas, by Sister Crescentia and her two companions. This little mountain city, often called the "Hill Country," was, before 1911, a wayside station, "composed of a few timid parishioners who possessed a toppling, dilapidated building adjoining the Baptist property, wherein services were held semi-monthly or less often by a priest from Boerne."[2] Today St. Mary's parish, with its church, rectory, two schools, and its convent is a prosperous, thriving center. Without doubt it owes its remarkable growth to the generosity of the late Mr. William Kemper, of Chicago, the father of Reverend H. M. Kemper, St. Mary's present pastor. Broken in health and threatened with an early death as a result of a disease contracted during his seminary days, Father Kemper left the American College in Rome, for his home in Chicago, where he was ordained by Archbishop Quigley, December 8, 1910. Encouraged by reports of the favorable climatic conditions of Texas, he determined to seek a brief rest and

[1] *Diary of St. Joseph's Infirmary.*

[2] *The Catholic Church of Kerrville, Texas.* Kerrville, 1919 and 1920.

possibly a restoration to health at St. Mary's Sanitarium, Boerne. Shortly after his arrival in the South, Father Kemper was requested by the pastor of Boerne to prepare a class of Mexican children living in Kerrville for their first Holy Communion. Entering upon his new field, February 28, 1911, his labors in behalf of the "Hill Country" have been ceaseless. Mr. William Kemper's gratitude for his son's restoration to health found expression in the substantial buildings erected between 1911 and 1914. St. Mary's Park, the site of Notre Dame Academy, is one of the attractive and ornamental sections of the city. There were no pioneer days for Sister Crescentia and her successors in office, for St. Mary's Convent had been furnished with every conventual requirement. The school opened in the autumn of 1912 with an enrollment of twenty-eight pupils, which number has increased to one hundred and forty-four. The large class of Mexican children required the erection of our Lady of Guadalupe School in 1915; this building, likewise, the gift of Mr. Kemper, furnishes accommodation to one hundred pupils who are taught by two Sisters from Notre Dame Academy.

In the fall, Sister Edmund and six companions were sent to Marfa, Texas, a little town near the western border of the State. St. Mary's, the pioneer Catholic school in that place, rose rapidly into favor and prospered.

St. Joseph's Academy, San Angelo, Texas, is the last foundation recorded in the Annals for 1912. As the Immaculate Conception School, which had been in operation since 1888, was inadequate for the purposes of a boarding institute, the Council decided to purchase the Methodist College. Built of red brick with white stone facings and an imposing pillared entrance, the handsome three-storied structure was situated on an elevation, a quarter of a mile beyond the city limits. Its splendid, wide, corridors on each floor assured healthy ventilation, and its classrooms, music rooms, auditorium, sleeping, and administrative apartments had been scientifically equipped. Unfortunately, the former owners of the College had made a failure of their administration, and were

obliged to sell the property. On the first Sunday of September Bishop Shaw, assisted by a number of the clergy from surrounding parishes, blessed the building now solemnly dedicated to St. Joseph. The event created enthusiasm among the friends of the Community who congratulated Reverend Mother Alphonse on her success in securing so favorable an institution for Catholic educational purposes, and the local press was generous in its expressions of appreciation. As soon as Sister Emiliana and her community of eleven Sisters had organized their classes, Reverend Mother, who had attended the opening ceremonies at St. Joseph's, departed for San Antonio. She had scarcely reached the Motherhouse when the Congregation suffered the greatest loss recorded in the Annals—the destruction of St. John's Orphanage and the tragic death of five of the Sisters.

St. John's had been built at the cost of many sacrifices. For a number of years the orphan boys had found a home in Santa Rosa Infirmary but the accommodations were not sufficient to meet the continuously increasing demands. In 1890 Reverend Mother St. Pierre and her Council determined to erect a special building. A letter written to the members of the Congregation informed them of the decision and exhorted all to "help procure a home for God's little ones."

This help meant the redoubling of their self-denying acts—a contribution the Sisters willingly made. With their united savings, the Orphanage, called St. John's in memory of the saintly Bishop Neraz, was built. Its spacious apartments on the third and fourth floors had served the purposes of a novitiate until the Motherhouse was built; for years Bishop Neraz had made it his home; besides, to the late lamented Bishop Forest it had been a refuge from the trials and worries of the day. It is not surprising then, that fond memories and loved traditions lingered around St. John's.

On the morning of October 30, 1912, the death knell of the Orphanage was sounded and in less than two hours it was not only a heap of ruins but also the funeral pyre of Mother Mary of the Cross and four Sisters. Towards half past four o'clock in

the morning, Sister Edith, who supervised the boys' dormitory on the third floor, was awakened from sleep by a little lad crying for a drink. Rising quickly and opening a door which led to the stairway she discovered the entire passage filled with smoke. Closing the door immediately, and turning to the sleeping children, she said in a clear and steady voice: "Get up boys, and go over to the ward at Santa Rosa." Without a moment's hesitation the children arose and led by Sister Broghan, went down the fire escape. Following her charges Sister Edith found on reaching the ground floor that Father Hume was already on the scene and was hurrying the boys to the hospital. In the meantime the gardener had made his way to the fourth floor and aroused the Sisters and the boys. While some were leading the children through the rear of the building, others, among whom were Sister Mary Kostka and Sister Monica, found themselves in a front room on the fourth floor, completely cut off from escape.

"By this time Chief Wright and his men had arrived. The roar of fire, now a beacon light of tragedy, cutting into the blackness of the night with a column of flame that could be seen for miles and which was already horrifying the city, was increased by the noise of the engines. . . . Ladders were spliced together, the lines of hose were playing thick streams of water, but, as though defying every human effort the pillar of flame shot higher. Then the Sisters whose egress had been cut off by the fire, trapped in their frantic search, began appearing at the windows." [3]

Sister Mary Kostka was the first to jump, followed by Sister Monica. Both missed the nets. They were rushed to Santa Rosa; Sister Monica died almost instantly; Sister Mary Kostka sustained a broken back and for days hovered between life and death.

"Suddenly Mother Mary of the Cross stood silhouetted in a third story window, her arms tightly clasped around a dark object. . . . From firemen, policemen, from half a thousand throats came shouted messages, telling her rescue was coming. The two long ladders, spliced together, had been rushed to a position beneath the window. . . . Fire Chief Wright was attempting to reach her and had climbed nearly to the third floor

[3] Report taken from the San Antonio *Express*, October 31, 1912.

when a window below burst out and in the up-swirl, his arms were burned. He dropped back and before he could continue, the figures at the window vanished; whether Mother was drawn back, falling into the furnace that now emptied its red fury through the window, or whether she sought desperately another window, will never be known—she passed from sight as quickly as the tongues of flames were swallowed up by the night." [4]

At half-past six o'clock the fire was sufficiently subdued to permit the work of rescue to begin. Only then were the horrors of the morning revealed. In reply to the roll-call eighty-nine of the ninety-two boys answered "present." Out of a community of nine all but four Sisters had responded to the eternal summons. In the midst of a silence suggestive of the sacredness of death the firemen undertook their task; the body of Mother Mary of the Cross was the first discovered, near to it were the charred remains of Mother Francis, the first Sister who had entered the Congregation in San Antonio; Sister Leocadia and Sister Peter Claver were found next, they had no doubt missed the fire-escape and had perished together. As the remains of each Sister were recovered they were wrapped in a sheet and borne by the firemen, bareheaded and silent, to the community room in Santa Rosa, where they were tenderly placed upon the biers by Reverend Mother Alphonse and Mother Mary John.

The grief of the Sisters at this awful death of their loved ones cannot be described. To the God of Consolation Who alone could assuage their sorrow they turned, mingling tears with the prayers they offered for the repose of the souls of their departed dead; in humble resignation to His Will they spent the day and night beside those dear remains.

At nine o'clock on Thursday morning Bishop Shaw began the celebration of a Pontifical Mass of Requiem, with the six coffins ranged along side of one another before the Communion railing—five of them plain black, contained the remains of the five Sisters, the sixth a small white one, the remains of two orphan boys lost in the fire. (The remains of the third little boy were never found.) The Bishop was assisted in the Mass by Reverend W. A. Fuhrwerk; Reverend L. Tragesser was deacon, and

[4] *Ibid.*

Reverend H. Wirtz was sub-deacon; Very Reverend Antoine and Reverend Moczygemba were deacons of honor, and Reverends Hume and Schneider, masters of ceremonies. . . . Fully forty priests were present including practically all in the city and one or two from outside. The music of the Mass was strictly Gregorian and was rendered by a choir of Sisters.

After Mass the "Libera" was chanted; thereupon the Bishop endeavored to deliver a brief eulogy of the departed, but his heart was too full of emotion and he was obliged to desist. He offered only words of consolation to the afflicted Sisters and mourning Congregation and pronounced the last absolution.

The long cortege then passed to the old San Fernando Cemetery, the orphan boys and girls, with the pupils of the San Fernando's School in the lead; next came five black hearses and one white one bearing the bodies of the deceased.[5]

"If" wrote the editor of the Galveston Tribune, "there can be found a circumstance that would lessen the awfulness of the appalling story of the orphanage fire, it will be found in the heroic conduct of the women who had charge over the eighty odd little children who were inmates of the institution when the alarm of fire aroused them from sleep. The world has often been told of how these white-faced, black-clad religious had nursed the sick in time of epidemic, of how they bound up the wounds of those whom battle had mangled and torn, but it has been left to San Antonio to give to humanity a new chapter in self-sacrifice in the six nuns who, when the moment of testing came, proved true to the teachings of the Master they served, and laid down their lives for the safety of those over whom they had been given charge."

"There was nothing amazing about it, however," continues the editor of the Houston Post. "The centuries are brilliant with the devotion of these women who have renounced the world to battle with distress, misfortune, and sorrow. They have died in such emergencies and exemplified the extreme sacrifice of Calvary, and they will always do so when duty calls them. Not one of these nuns was a native of the United States. Four were from Ireland, one from France and one from Mexico;[6] but all attained unto that sublimity of womanly faith and devotion which attests humanity's kinship with God. The tragedy enables us to see, however,

[5] *Southern Messenger*, November 7, 1912.

[6] Mother Mary of the Cross, Catherine Rossiter, was from Wexford; Sister Peter Claver, Catherine Slevin, from Dublin; Sister Leocadia, Catherine Nolan also from Dublin. For some hours it was thought that Sister Mary Kostka Farrell, from County Kildare, was among the victims of the fire; as has been stated before Sister recovered slightly and is an invalid today. Mother Francis was Silvia Simpasteur from France and Sister Monica Montes was from Mexico.

that the distinctions of nationality or society which men and women set up amount to very little in the presence of such deeds. The Mother of Christ must have felt exalted in the example of the Irish daughter who 1900 years after Calvary, bore her name through the flames and brought it resplendent and glorified to the throne of God. It is futile to attempt to exalt these martyrs to faith and duty. Only God Almighty Himself can adequately honor and reward them and that task can be safely left to His Divine omnipotence and love."

Citations of sympathy culled from the secular press might be quoted indefinitely: each extolled the heroism and unselfishness of the nuns who willingly died at their posts of duty, each paid tribute to holy Mother Church who had taught her children that inspiring lesson: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend."[7]

The fire at St. John's made men pause; it made them acknowledge the reality of faith. "What scoffer, what agnostic does not turn from his contemplation convinced that faith is real?" asks the editor of the Fort Worth Star Telegram, "that it is something beyond blind faith that makes possible such noble sacrifice? Let the mourning be tempered by the knowledge that the task was not one that made them shudder and draw back. Rather may we believe they welcomed it as an opportunity to be of supreme service —to emulate in human way the great sacrifice of Him they served and loved."

Reports of the self-sacrifice and devotedness to duty which prompted Mother Mary of the Cross and her companions to face death for the sake of the little ones entrusted to their care, spread beyond Texas and reached even the Old World. Numerous messages of condolence were sent to Reverend Mother Alphonse among which were telegrams from many of the archbishops and bishops of the United States and Mexico.

"I am not disposed to pray for them, but with all due respect and regard for the prerogatives of the Holy See, I am inclined to pray to them," wrote Bishop Lynch of Dallas. "Dear Mother, in the light of Christian faith there ought to be joy in the Community of the Incarnate

[7] *St. John* 15: 13.

Word because in God's Providence great slanders against holy Religion have been silenced by reason of the example of those holy souls. Now the unbelieving world can contrast the nun of fiction with the nun of fact. . . . May God bless you and yours and strengthen you to do His work."

Among the many tributes the Sisters prized in a special manner one which came from a former pupil of Mother Mary of the Cross, Reverend M. S. Garriga:

My dear Reverend Mother:

No doubt you have wondered why, amongst the many letters and telegrams of condolence, you have not received a line from me. Truly, Reverend Mother, it was not that I felt it less but because I felt it so much that I too looked for sympathy and condolence.

The news of the terrible catastrophe was an awful blow to me, and I feel confident that none have grieved more at its dire results than I have. Too well I knew and appreciated the maternal love that burned in the heart of Mother Mary of the Cross, and the other martyred Sisters for God's poor; for through my life I have had that maternal love lavished upon me; hence when I heard of the terrible accident, I could not but feel that I had lost my own mother. For this reason I have not sent my condolence. With you and the Community I grieve at the loss of these noble souls. I have prayed for them and I shall continue to do so, even though I feel that they are crowned in Heaven for their heroic sacrifice."

Another tribute, published in the San Antonio Express, proves that the story of St. John's was productive of more than sympathy: "Not only every father and mother, but every human being that has a heart, regardless of religious belief, nationality, or creed, owes a debt of gratitude to the Sisters of St. John's Orphanage who went back into the flames and with little orphan arms around their necks lived and died the life they professed. I am not a Catholic. I am not a Christian. I don't believe in their religion. But I do with all my heart believe in such people as these Sisters, and to whatsoever land or clime such people go may their God help me and mine that we also may reach that blessed shore."

Numerous letters came from the various Sisterhoods; some lifelong friends of the Congregation, others identified only by the triple link that binds them to the same Divine Bridegroom. From the Convent of Mercy, New Ross, Ireland, Sister Gertrude, a former schoolmate of Mother Mary of the Cross wrote: "My poor dear companion of youth—Mother Mary of the Cross—always so good and gentle, how little I thought that the martyr's crown was

being prepared for you. . .'' ''We thank God for the courage with which He inspired the victims to meet death so nobly in the discharge of their duties; but then, too, their intercession with the Master for whose love they shrank not, from an appalling death, will bring untold blessings to their beloved Community.'' [8]

On January 26, 1913, Very Reverend W. W. Hume, chaplain of the San Antonio Council of the Knights of Columbus, introduced to the representatives of the Congregation the delegates of his Chapter, among whom was Judge M. E. Buckley. After expressing the sympathy of his brother Knights as well as the sentiments of the city at large, the judge delivered the following document to Reverend Mother:

To the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word whose members sacrificed their lives to save those of the orphan children, and to the relatives of the deceased Sisters:

WHEREAS: Humanity was inexpressibly shocked by the awful deaths of Mother Mary of the Cross, Mother M. Francis, Sister M. Monica, Sister Peter Claver, Sister Leocadia, on the morning of October 30, 1912, while endeavoring to save the lives of the orphans, during the fire which destroyed St. John's Orphanage of San Antonio, Texas;

*Resolved:* That we express to the surviving members of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and to the relatives of the deceased Sisters, our most sincere sympathy in their sad bereavement;

*Resolved:* That while thus extending our sympathy, we deem it but just to say that the Sisters, by their devoted lives and tragic deaths, have given the highest testimony of the faith in which they lived and died, and the strongest proof that religion inspires the sublimest courage and the noblest heroism;

*Resolved:* That the supreme sacrifice of the Sisters, in behalf of the children entrusted to their care, points in a most touching manner to the high place ever held by Catholic Sisterhoods, on the greatest roll of honor, and is at the same time, the most eloquent reply to him who would traduce those whose transgression has been an unfaltering devotion to duty.

"Other hopes had they none, nor wish in life, but to follow
Meekly with reverend steps, the sacred feet of their Savior."

Signed:

Committee.

[8] *Sister Camillus,* Convent of the Good Shepherd, Limerick, Ireland.

These testimonies of sympathy were received by the Sisters with appreciation and treasured as precious souvenirs. The memory of that morning in October will never be forgotten, nor will the generosity and courtesy of the people of San Antonio. There seemed to be but one family in the city that day, every member of which shared in the common sorrow. To provide for the orphans, now doubly homeless, was the consideration of all. Twenty of the oldest boys accompanied the Brothers of Mary to St. Louis College; the members of the Alumnae and friends of the Sisters took charge of others, and Father Hume, assisted by Father Ei, S. M., and several priests of the city, provided for the rest by converting the upper floor of San Fernando's School into dormitories.

The Sisters of St. Teresa kindly offered to care for the pupils of this school until such time as Reverend Mother Alphonse could replace the two teachers, Sisters Peter Claver and Leocadia. Towards nightfall the Sisters conducted the orphans to their temporary home, which, through the kindness of the authorities of the Army Post, had been furnished with cots and blankets. Friends and sympathizers had been busy all day supplying whatever would bring comfort to Sisters and children.

While the Community was caring for the immediate needs of the boys, others were looking to the future. The fires of St. John's were still smoldering when generous citizens of San Antonio, moved by the deeds of the morning, and the earnest appeals of Bishop Shaw, undertook the erection of a home for the orphans. Mass-meetings of the citizens were called by the Chamber of Commerce, at which measures were adopted and committees formed for the "New Orphanage Fund." The mayor of the city and the judges of the county and district courts gave their individual support to the enterprise, while the press of Texas solicited the cooperation of the entire State in the work of charity and gratitude.

All financial aid, regardless of its source, was transmitted to the common fund and later given to the Bishop of the diocese. So generous was the response that a few weeks after the catas-

trophe, Bishop Shaw was able to begin the preliminaries leading to the construction of the home.

While awaiting the completion of the building the orphans were transferred from San Fernando's School to the old Mission Conception, erected by the Franciscan Fathers in the early days of Texas history. The Annex, a two-storied house adjoining the Mission grounds, was rented by the Bishop; there the younger children were temporarily provided for. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the difficulties encountered by the Sisters in their new quarters; it suffices to say that the Mission, dating back to the eighteenth century, lacked every convenience. Nevertheless, there the Sisters continued to care for the children until the new institution was ready for dedication, December 28, 1913.

The new Orphanage, a three-storied fireproof building equipped with all necessary conveniences and capable of accommodating two hundred boys, is situated opposite the Mission in a delightful stretch of country. Mother Mary of the Cross' place as Superioress was filled by Sister Caesarius who, possessing, like her predecessor, a sympathetic heart, could enter into the views of the boys and be to them in every event a friend. The name St. Peter was selected by Bishop Shaw out of gratitude to Mr. Peter Kuntz, of chapel car fame, who generously contributed to the erection of the Orphanage.[9]

It would seem after the recital of the foregoing events that the Annals of 1912 could add little to their story of loss and sorrow; yet a perusal of those tear-stained pages reveals another chapter in that fateful year. On the morning of December 22, just two months after the loss of St. John's Orphanage, Reverend Mother Alphonse received a telegram from Father Nichols of San Angelo, announcing the total destruction of the recently purchased St. Joseph's Academy of that city. For a moment there was intense anxiety at Alamo Heights lest the whole story had not been told; a later message, however, brought the assurance that all the Sisters and pupils were safe.

[9] KELLY, F. C., *The Story of Extension*, p. 91, Chicago, 1922.

A fire, of unknown origin, had broken out on the first floor of the building sometime before five o'clock. Although every effort was made by the Sisters to extinguish the blaze their work was as child's play in the face of those stifling volumes of smoke and flame. Impatient at the delay of the firemen, who had been notified as soon as the fire was discovered, some of the Sisters hastened to a private residence a half mile from the Academy, where, in answer to their repeated telephone calls, they were informed that the department would not be sent to their aid. "The building was a quarter of a mile beyond the city limits and was not entitled to the city's protection." Left alone in their helplessness the community stood on the prairie and watched the massive structure gradually enveloped by flames.

The community of St. John's Sanitarium had just assembled in the chapel when a telephone message informed them that St. Joseph's Academy was on fire. Immediately Mother de Sales and a Sister, accompanied by Father C. Pellicier, the chaplain, set out on a five-mile ride across the plains now brilliantly lighted. The Sisters at the parochial school likewise saw the conflagration, but having no means of reaching the Academy, telephoned to a number of friends who hastened out to the burning building. Within an hour an anxious, willing group had gathered around the Sisters, among whom were Father Nichols, pastor of the Sacred Heart Church, and two firemen who, disobeying the orders of their chief, had risked discharge in order to lend assistance. Unable to enter the building, all stood silently watching the massive structure until the Sisters, realizing the uselessness of remaining longer in the sleet and cold, left for St. John's Sanitarium. It was a forlorn group that drove to the hospital that morning; scarcely one was dressed completely, and though the thermometer registered several degrees below freezing, no one possessed a mantle or a shawl. Once arrived at St. John's, the sisterly devotion of the community, and of Mother de Sales in particular, atoned for the coldness and indifference of the outside world.

The heavy financial loss, added to the lack of cooperation on the part of the fire chief, was seriously deplored. The mayor of San Angelo sent a letter of apology, and during a council meeting held the day after the fire, incorporated within the city limits the property of the Sanitarium and the Academy. This act, though appreciated by the Sisters, came too late as far as the latter institution was concerned. St. Joseph's Academy was never rebuilt; the teachers were transferred to the parochial school where they continued their classes with characteristic earnestness and devotion.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### Expansion of the Congregation under Reverend Mother Alphonse. 1912—1918.

When Reverend Mother Alphonse withdrew the Sisters from Clarendon in 1911, she did so with the intention of opening a school in Amarillo, Texas, where a community was in charge of St. Anthony's Sanitarium. Accordingly, in 1913 Sister de Pazzi and five companions were sent to north Texas to begin the organization of St. Mary's Academy. As the handsome building then in the course of construction would not be ready for occupancy until the following spring, the Sisters conducted their classes in three small cottages rented for the purpose by the pastor, Father Dunn.

Knowing that the Catholic population of the Panhandle was not large, the Sisters, who expected a small enrollment the first session, were surprised when sixty-three day students and seven boarders registered on the opening day of school. Through the kindness of Mr. Davenport, a friend of the community, additional school furniture was secured from the Amarillo Academy, which had recently closed its doors.

Sister de Pazzi and her assistants were kept busy in their crowded cottages until March, 1914, when St. Mary's was completed. On the first Sunday of the month the ceremonies of dedication were performed by Archbishop J. J. Harty of Manila who was assisted by Bishop Lynch of Dallas, Father Dunn and Father Hickey.[1] The site of the Academy, covering a tract of ten acres, faces Amarillo's largest park; and the building, a three-storied brick structure with ornate trimmings of cast cement stone, has been equipped for academic and commercial work. As there is no parochial school attached to the Sacred Heart parish, St.

[1] Buotich, C. D., *A Historical Sketch of the Sacred Heart Parish*, p. 25, Amarillo, 1922.

Mary's, though primarily a boarding institution, receives boys as day pupils in the primary and grammar grades.

Despite the promises of success made during the initial days of the Academy, there was a brief period during which bigotry and calumny threatened its very existence. Lecturers, seemingly ignorant of the truths of Catholicism, not only attempted to prejudice the minds of the people of Amarillo, but threatened them with dire consequences, if they persisted in sending their children to the new convent school. In the course of time the non-Catholics saw that facts contradicted the false utterances of the propagandists; their investigations inspired them with confidence in the Sisters, and in union with their Catholic neighbors they became loyal supporters of the Academy.

With an enrollment of one hundred and thirty-six the second year the school was raised to a standard which was deemed excellent by its patrons; its reputation as an institution of thorough training attracted to it many desirable pupils from Oklahoma, Texas, Kentucky, and New Mexico and in 1921 St. Mary's was affiliated with the State Department of Education. The satisfactory reports of the examiners who visit the classes yearly have served to encourage the Sisters while they strengthen the confidence of the patrons of St. Mary's.

Another school, Our Lady of the Ozarks, West Plains, Missouri, claimed the labors of a community of Sisters, of whom Sister Emiliana was the Superioress. As the Catholic population of West Plains is small, the number of pupils did not answer the expectations of the Superiors nor was it sufficient to support the school. The Sisters were recalled to the Motherhouse in 1915 and the property was sold.

As the year 1913 marked the third anniversary of the opening of the postulate in Holland, Reverend Mother Alphonse felt it her duty to visit St. Mary's, Zevenaar. On September 10, accompanied by Mother Bonaventure and Sister Frederica, the latter destined to remain in Holland, she left New York on board La Savoie for France. Fair weather, a calm sea, and the good for-

tune of having Holy Communion and two Masses daily, made the voyage an ideal one. After seven days of sailing the travelers reached Havre; from there they went to Lyons to visit the old Monastery of the Incarnate Word, which was serving the purpose of a college for boys under the supervision of priest-professors. A brief stop was made at Fribourg in Switzerland after which the journey was continued to Zevenaar. A heartfelt welcome was accorded the travelers wherever they went, but a very special one awaited them at St. Mary's Convent. The visitation was productive of much happiness, for the simple, direct manner of Reverend Mother Alphonse seldom failed to gain the confidence of her Sisters.

After their sojourn in Rome, where besides enjoying the privilege of a public audience with His Holiness, Pius X, they had an interview with His Eminence Cardinal Martinelli, the Cardinal Protector of the Congregation, Reverend Mother Alphonse and Mother Bonaventure embarked for America. Accompanying them were four candidates from Ireland and six postulants from Holland, all of whom entered the San Antonio novitiate.

An unusual number of requests for foundations had been received by the Council during the absence of Reverend Mother. To respond to the satisfaction of all was by no means easy since the personnel of the Congregation was not in proportion to the demands. However, in accordance with tradition, precedence was given the most urgent need. In this regard a new training school for the nurses of Santa Rosa Infirmary and St. Luke's Clinic claimed the Superiors' first consideration. On the site formerly occupied by St. John's Orphanage, a spacious, modern building was erected for the student nurses; at the same time a clinic was added to the hospital. The latter was to some extent a result of the endeavors of Bishop Shaw. Realizing the need of an organized branch of charity which would afford medical attention to the poor, he had, during his administration of the diocese, informed Reverend Mother of his desire. His plan found favor with the members of the Council and additional reception and operating

rooms, as well as free wards for the patients, and a dental department were equipped and opened to the city on April 14, 1914. In this section of the hospital's activities, established especially for eye, throat, and nose diseases, Doctor Burleson and Doctor Walthal, aided by the Sisters, maintain daily service for the free treatment of the poor. Between the years 1915 and 1918 the number of registered cases increased from two thousand two hundred and five to five thousand four hundred and seventy-three.[2] Within the last year the name of the department has been changed from St. Luke's to the Santa Rosa Clinic.

The next call was for a hospital in McAlester, Oklahoma. At the request of the doctors and other interested persons the Community purchased the handsome colonial residence of Mr. Melvin Cornish, and converted it into St. Mary's Hospital. Towards the early part of May six Sisters, of whom Sister de Sales was the Superioress, took formal charge of the institution. Although accommodations are limited, St. Mary's, which is the only Catholic hospital in the locality, is thoroughly appreciated and well patronized.

The request of Father P. H. Bradley, of St. Louis, Missouri, led Reverend Mother to send seven Sisters, under the direction of Sister Kevin, to conduct the parochial school connected with the Blessed Sacrament parish. The number of pupils, that during the opening year totalled two hundred, increased to six hundred, the faculty has been doubled and the original building has been replaced by a modern and scientific structure. The success of this institution is due primarily to the devotion of Father Bradley, whose interest in pupils and faculty has been unflagging.

The same year that records the opening of the Blessed Sacrament School brought an appeal from Father J. B. Pleus of the Immaculate Conception parish, Jefferson City, Missouri. An intimate friend of Father Bradley, Father Pleus was at the same time no stranger to the Community, his office as chaplain of the Joseph-

[2] From the files of the Santa Rosa Hospital.

ine Hospital in St. Louis having acquainted him with its work. Reverend Mother Alphonse answered his request for teachers by sending Sister Edmund and four assistants who opened the school in September.

St. Joseph's School, Norman, Oklahoma, which had formerly been conducted by the Benedictine Sisters, received a community of which Sister Berchmanns was the Superioress. The request for teachers for this institution came from Monsignor Metter, who for eighteen years had been pastor of Norman. Although the enrollment was small and the school in financial difficulties, the Sisters, aided by the firm cooperation of the pastor, were able to inaugurate the work. The years following record a remarkable increase in the attendance, and the building, having become too small to accommodate the pupils, was renovated and enlarged. With the installation of proper library and laboratory facilities the school became affiliated with the Oklahoma University. Monsignor Metter spared no expense while equipping his school; even when the World War brought losses to his property in Belgium, he preferred to deny himself the necessities of life rather than impose privations on St. Joseph's. He had frequently expressed a wish to pass the declining years of his life as chaplain of the Incarnate Word College, the progress of which he noted with keen interest, but death came after a brief and painful illness, January 11, 1923. His successor, Father Van Wees has converted the school into a parochial institution and continues to cooperate in making it an educational center.

While making the foregoing foundations in Missouri and Oklahoma Reverend Mother Alphonse was asked to take charge of a school in the newly erected St. Philip's parish, San Antonio. As there were no accommodations for the community, Sister Paul and her companions dwelt with the Sisters at St. Francis Home until the Fathers in charge of the parish secured a rented house in the neighborhood of the school. The population of this section of the city is to a large extent Mexican, among whom the Sisters have

effected incalculable good by counteracting the proselytizing influences prevalent today in many parts of Texas.

In January 1915, St. Mary's School, Hobson, Texas, was opened; in the fall of the same year Taos, Missouri, received a colony of three Sisters under the direction of Sister Crescentia. Of the latter, Reverend Joseph Schmidt, a personal friend of Father Pleus, was the pastor. When the Franciscan Sisters who formerly were in charge of St. Francis Xavier's School withdrew, two young ladies zealously devoted their time to the children of the parish. Taos is a thoroughly Catholic locality, consequently, the Sisters had little difficulty in training their pupils to practices of piety. The sudden death of Father Schmidt, in 1921, resulted in the appointment of Father W. Huelsman, who has been untiring in his efforts to assist the teachers. Through his encouragement a handsome, well-equipped school building has been erected, the faculty of which has sent five of its pupils to the Incarnate Word Novitiate at San Antonio.

When the Maywood Hospital in Sedalia, Missouri, was offered for sale, the doctors and citizens requested Reverend Mother to purchase the property. So anxious were the former to have the institution in the hands of the Sisters, whom they knew through their intercourse with the Railroad Hospital of the city, that they cooperated with the people of Sedalia in contributing at least five-sixths of the building's cost. On August 23, 1915, the Maywood, under the direction of Sister Cleophas and seven assistants, became St. Mary's Hospital. That same month patients were received.

As the accommodations are by no means sufficient to satisfy the demands, St. Mary's staff of nurses is looking forward to the day when the hospital will be enlarged. The Sisters have opened the institution to all the doctors of the city, whereas before the transfer only those of the staff were allowed to practise; this change has secured the patronage and interest of all the physicians of Sedalia.

For many years the old San Francisco de la Espada Mission, nine miles below San Antonio, had been allowed to crumble and decay. In 1915, restored and furnished, it was placed in charge

of three Sisters whose labors among the families scattered around the old mission property have been blessed a hundredfold. To mention this mission is to recall the memory of Monsignor W. W. Hume, the chancellor of the diocese, who not only loved this venerable landmark of Texas church history, but restored it to Divine worship. Though a son of one of the old families of England, and justly proud of the honors bestowed upon him by the University of Oxford, Father Hume, after the example of his Master, lived among the poor Mexicans, shared their language, baptized and catechised their little ones, defended them, and pleaded for their rights.

When he discovered around the Espada Mission a number of families, most of whom were exiles and destitute of the necessaries of life, his great charitable heart was touched. The extent of Father Hume's liberality is a secret to all but God, but it is known that he provided the poor with food, clothing, and shelter. Nor was this all. Among the mission colony were children who had to be taught the truths of their religion. Father Hume appealed to Reverend Mother Alphonse who, though realizing the difficulties entailed, sent Sister Pauline, Sister Emmanual, and Sister Simplicia as the Espada's first community. Before the arrival of the Sisters, Father Hume, assisted by Father Garriga, renovated and equipped the chapel, the classrooms, and the convent, all of which were ready for the opening day, the first of September.

The program of life in the Mission has an interest all its own. There are no telephones or electric lights; water is drawn from the old well dug during the days of Franciscan occupation; and when necessity requires the Sisters to pay a visit to the city, they must depend on the conveyance of some kind neighbor. Though Holy Mass is offered but three times a week, every feast day is celebrated with touching solemnity. During Father Hume's residence in San Antonio, San Francisco de la Espada received his first consideration. He revived many of the old Spanish customs, the most picturesque of which was the public celebration of the

feast of St. Francis of Assisi. On the fourth of October a solemn High Mass was sung in the quaint old chapel, the music of which was rendered by the boys' choir from St. Peter's Orphanage, with Father Hume presiding at the organ. In the afternoon a procession composed of the children and the older members of the parish was made around the patio, the ancient statue of St. Francis, carved out of wood and ornamented with a crown of beaten silver, was carried in state on the shoulders of four Mexican youths while a band played sweet but plaintive music; when the procession returned to the chapel, the rosary was recited and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament closed the day's festivities.[3]

In 1916 Archbishop de la Mora of the City of Mexico, who during his exile dwelt in San Antonio, presided at the celebration of the feast of St. Francis. "He with the other clergy of Mexico who had been despoiled of the barest subsistence found in the diocese of San Antonio, in the person of Father Hume, a friend on whom they could rely for the relief of their destitution. In grateful acknowledgment of their appreciation for his support they petitioned the Holy See to have their noble benefactor honored as a Prelate of the Papal Household."[4] Father Hume was also made honorary canon of the national shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico, and honorary member of the Cathedral Chapter of Guadalajara in token of his splendid relief work among the poor and destitute Mexican refugees.[5]

When summoned to New Orleans in 1919 to perform the office of secretary to the Archbishop, Monsignor Hume did not forget his friends at the Espada. Ill health brought him frequently to San Antonio, where in the peace and quiet of the Community's guest house on Alamo Heights, he endeavored to regain his rapidly failing strength. During these visits his first desire was to drive to the Mission, which seemingly enabled him in the midst of the poorest to be contented and happy. There was nothing pretentious

[3] *Diary of the Espada Mission.*
[4] Archbishop Shaw, *Southern Messenger*, March 27, 1924.
[5] Surgranes, Rev. E., *Southern Messenger*, April 3, 1924.

about Father Hume; he hated conventionalities; his sincere, straightforward manner was sometimes a little trying to highly sensitive natures, but there was a loyalty about him which few can equal. When Sister Pauline, who had spent six years at the Espada, commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of her religious profession, Father Hume in a telegram to Reverend Mother Mary John, expressed his desire to visit San Antonio in order to celebrate the jubilee Mass.

Recognized as one of the foremost authorities in Roman liturgy Monsignor Hume labored earnestly in restoring to its pristine beauty the church's impressive music. In 1916 he had the pleasure of reaping some of the fruits of his labors. The Diocesan Musical Commission held its first sacred concert in San Antonio and the success achieved by the numerous choirs which participated in the program elicited well merited commendation. Three of the choirs were under the direction of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word who had received their training in Gregorian chant from Father Albert V. Lohmann. The event was a unique one for the musicians of the city and received the following comment from the local press:

These sacred concerts are more or less on the mutual aid plan . . . each choir is anxious to notice, and to strive after those good points which it may observe in other choirs. Furthermore, this first sacred concert served to give the people of San Antonio some idea about church music. It has, we hope, shown the Catholic public that there is something in Church music—something solemn, something reverent and inspiring, something that is calculated to cause its hearers to bow down in humble adoration before the Supreme Being. That this result was attained, at least as regards plain chant, was remarked during the program. Many of the numbers sung were beautifully executed, and heartily appreciated by the audience. But the plain chant, that music which is essentially the music of the Church carried away the laurels of the afternoon. Twenty-eight young girls forming the choir of St. Joseph's Orphanage sang the Introit of the Mass of the dead—the solemn Requiem. It can safely be said that its like was never before heard in San Antonio. The Right Reverend Bishop at the end of the program, complimented all the choirs on their success; but especially dwelt upon the beauty of one number in particular. He did not designate the number—it was not necessary, all knew that he

referred to the Requiem as sung by the young girls of St. Joseph's Orphanage.

Very Reverend T. Laboure, O. M. I., the president of the Diocesan Musical Commission, is authority for the following statement: No professional choir could have sung the Requiem better. It was perfect—perfect in itself, perfect in its every detail. This will, it is hoped, show the average Catholic that there is in plain chant when well rendered, something reverent, and inspiring, something far removed from the customary jumble of sounds accepted as plain chant. The result obtained by St. Joseph's Orphanage can be obtained by any choir that took part in the program. Plain chant is always beautiful and inspiring when well rendered.[6]

The death of Monsignor Hume in March, 1924, deprived the archdiocese of New Orleans of a wise and firm chancellor, and left in the hearts of his many friends a feeling of sorrow and regret.

In addition to the Espada Mission the Congregation took charge of Our Lady of Guadalupe School in San Antonio. This institution, formerly conducted by the Teresian Sisters, was accepted at the earnest request of the Fathers of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Beginning with a registration of sixty and a faculty of four Sisters, of whom Sister Eulalie was Superioress, Our Lady of Guadalupe School had, in 1918, a daily attendance of five hundred pupils. This school and that of the Sacred Heart parish, Shafter, Texas, the latter opened at the request of the newly appointed Bishop Schuler of El Paso, complete the foundations made during the administrations of Reverend Mother Alphonse.

Just before the convocation of the General Chapter, San Antonio was deprived of its Bishop, who was appointed to the archdiocese of New Orleans. The announcement was received with joy throughout the South, especially in New Orleans, where, as the editor of the Morning Star wrote, he was "already known, loved, and honored because of his great sacerdotal virtue, true personal worth, his genial and lovable nature, and the great work he has accomplished for God and the Church."[7] Among his people in San

[6] *Southern Messenger* for March 9, 1916.

[7] *Morning Star*, New Orleans, February 16, 1918.

Antonio, however, pride mingled with regret as they bade him farewell, for they realized the moral and religious force Bishop Shaw was in the diocese. Apart from the love and veneration which he left in the hearts of Catholics and non-Catholics, the latter of whom regarded him as the exemplification of the fundamentals of right living, Bishop Shaw left in the chapels and churches he built, in the seminary he founded, in the orphanage he erected, and in the missions he restored and rededicated to Divine worship, a memorial time will not efface. Yet these are but a part of the accomplishments effected during his eight years' episcopacy. His countless acts of kindness, his wise counsels, and helpful encouragements have equally endeared him to all who had the privilege of knowing him. Archbishop-elect Shaw visited every school in the diocese before leaving for New Orleans. On May 6, he was entertained at the Incarnate Word College, where, after attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the students tendered him a farewell reception. In an allegory entitled "Defending the City of God," composed for the occasion by Mother Columbanus, they recalled the life-work of His Grace as student, priest, and bishop, and touchingly expressed to him their gratitude and devotion.

Not long after his departure for New Orleans, Archbishop Shaw returned for two short visits to San Antonio. During the first he presided at the Chapter which elected Mother Mary John, Superioress General of the Congregation, and Mother Alphonse, Assistant; the Consulters chosen were Mother Colette, Mother Bonaventure, Secretary, Mother Bridget, Mother Cleophas, and Mother Columbanus; Mother Wendelinus was re-elected Treasurer.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Administration of Reverend Mother Mary John.
### The Golden Jubilee.
### 1918—1924.

The election of Reverend Mother Mary John (Margaret O'Shaughnessy) brought to the office of Superioress-General a religious whose devotion to duty and recognized ability have won for her the esteem of the whole Congregation. Born in Chaerciveen, Ireland, Reverend Mother entered the Community in 1883. By her conscientious fulfillment of the office of teacher, mistress of novices, and assistant during two administrations, she had contributed to the development of the Community and at the same time had acquired an intimate knowledge of the workings of its individual institutions. Her versatile mind added to her years of experience enabled her to comprehend the various problems confronting the Congregation at the time of her election, so that she readily undertook to meet the situation in a practical manner. In union with the Superiors charged with the care of the medical, educational, and social departments of the Congregation, Reverend Mother Mary John sought to afford every Sister an opportunity of perfecting herself in her particular avocation. The encouragement and sympathy thus imparted resulted in renewed efforts in science, letters, and arts.

Scarcely had the administration entered upon its duties when it was called upon to cooperate with the health authorities in combating the evils resulting from the outbreak of the influenza epidemic. The World War which made San Antonio a training-center for the Southwest brought thousands of young men to the various camps located around the city. Many of those stationed at Camp Travis had already found an entrance to the Incarnate Word Chapel on Alamo Heights, where, besides paying frequent

visits to the Blessed Sacrament, they attended Mass and received Holy Communion; on such occasions they were never allowed to return to the camp fasting. When the epidemic spread alarmingly through Camp Travis, Fort Sam Houston, Kelly Field, and the congested parts of the city, the health officers, hoping to check the disease, closed all the schools; a few days later a similar ban was placed on the churches. With hospitals and camps taxed to their utmost capacity, and many of the nurses belonging to the regular corps listed among the sick, the doctors faced a critical situation. Through Father McDonald, chaplain of Fort Sam Houston, Major Kellam, Commander of the medical department of the Fort appealed to the Community for nurses.

Although the hospitals in charge of the Congregation were sending similar requests, the closing of the schools made it possible for Reverend Mother to recall to San Antonio all available Sister nurses whom she placed at the service of the United States Government.

"For the first time in the history of the base hospital Fort Sam Houston, nursing sisters from the Catholic orders are not only on duty but are living at the hospital and nursing until the present emergency is passed," was the announcement which appeared in the San Antonio Light.

On Sunday morning October 19, Mother Cleophas and Mother William, two professional nurses, accompanied by nine Sisters reported to Major Kellam for duty. They were placed in charge of an entire ward to which only the serious pneumonia cases were confided.

The Base Hospital was not the only section of the city which received a contingent of Sister nurses. In answer to an appeal from Father Hume in behalf of the City Hospital, then crowded with the suffering poor, four Sisters of Divine Providence, four Sisters of the Holy Ghost, and eleven Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word under Sister Philip Neri reported to Doctor Hill, the Superintendent. Night and day services were likewise required of these nurses, for as the epidemic continued, the number of secular nurses in charge of the institution decreased.

While Reverend Mother Mary John was thus meeting the situation in San Antonio, reports of community activities were brought from the other hospitals in Texas, in Missouri, and in Oklahoma. The staffs of all the institutions were kept hourly occupied and several had the sad duty of reporting the death of one or more of the Sisters. Among the victims of the disease was Sister Brendan, one of the Community's most gifted and devoted teachers. Forced by ill-health to discontinue her work in the class-room, she performed the office of recording secretary at the Santa Rosa Clinic, her thorough knowledge of Spanish enabling her to act as interpreter between nurses and patients. Her death occurred at the hospital in the early part of October. From the Missouri-Kansas and Texas Hospital in Sedalia came the announcement of the death of Sister Scholastica of Jesus; Sister Sixtus passed away at St. Anthony's Sanitarium, Amarillo, and the community at Santa Rosa lost two of its most valued members, Sister Agnes Dominic and Sister Georgina. The latter was bacteriologist and Sister Agnes Dominic, who had lately completed her course of studies, was a graduated pharmacist. Gentle and devoted Sister Sixtus and Sister Scholastica of Jesus were missed by Sisters and patients alike. With a heavy heart Reverend Mother received these announcements in addition to the reports that many of the Sisters then occupied at the Base Hospital and the Robert B. Green Memorial had been overcome by influenza. Fortunately, the month of November brought improved conditions to San Antonio and by degrees the Sisters were recalled to the Motherhouse.

Shortly after their return Major General Cabell, Commanding Officer of the Southern Department, called at the Convent to express his appreciation for the services rendered by the Sisters in relieving the situation at the Post. Major F. C. A. Kellam made a similar visit and emphasized his gratitude by directing to Reverend Mother the following letter:

My dear Mother:—

I wish to express to you my earnest and heartfelt thanks for the great assistance afforded this hospital during the recent influenza epidemic by

the nursing Sisters under your direction. These nurses came to us when our wards were literally filled with the men who were the victims of the terrible pneumonia following influenza.

Practically all these men were fighting for life. When I saw our nursing forces becoming depleted by illness and other causes, I appealed to you for help and that help was immediately forthcoming.

The work done by your Sisters at this hospital won the admiration of all in authority here, and earned the gratitude of every patient who came under their care.

I extend to you again, and through you to each individual Sister, my earnest and sincere thanks for the assistance so nobly rendered; and I assure you that the entire personnel of this institution stands ready at any time to reciprocate in kind, should ever you or yours be in need of similar service.

With best wishes for your success, believe me to be, as ever,

Gratefully yours,

F. C. A. Kellam,
Lieutenant-Colonel Medical Corps,
U. S. Army, Commanding.[1]

A short time after the Sisters returned from the City Hospital Mayor Bell forwarded to Santa Rosa Infirmary the following resolutions:

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the City of San Antonio, that the thanks of the City of San Antonio be and are hereby extended to the management and nursing staff of the Santa Rosa Infirmary for their very devoted and commendable services rendered to the patients and the management of the Robert B. Green Memorial Hospital during the recent prevalence of Spanish Influenza in this city, at a time when practically all the nurses of the R. B. Green Memorial Hospital were more or less afflicted with this ailment and incapacitated for duty; and be it

Further Resolved that the City Clerk be and is hereby directed to transmit a copy of these Resolutions to the management of the Santa Rosa Infirmary.

Adopted November 14, 1918.

(Signed) Sam C. Bell, Mayor,
Attest: Fred Fries, City Clerk.[2]

In small localities, for instance Kerrville, Texas, where no organized nursing corps existed, the work of the Sisters was productive

[1] A copy of this letter is in the *Archives at the Motherhouse.*
[2] *Ibid.*

of immeasurable good. In answer to the appeal of Father Kemper, who had converted Our Lady of Guadalupe School into an emergency hospital, Reverend Mother sent two Sister nurses to assist the Notre Dame faculty in caring for the sick. The gratitude of the people of Kerrville was expressed in a letter written by Mayor Geddie:

Reverend Mother General:—

As Mayor of Kerrville, I wish to thank you in the name of the entire citizenship for the trained nurses you so kindly sent from your Sisterhood to care for the poor Mexicans during the Spanish influenza epidemic, when the school building of Our Lady of Guadalupe was utilized as a City Emergency Hospital through the kindness of Reverend Father Kemper.

I share the belief of the health officer, Doctor E. E. Palmer, that the Sisters, by their self-sacrificing and painstaking devotion to the sick, both day and night, saved many patients from death, and helped to safeguard our vicinity from imminent and grave peril.

For this assistance in our hour of need, permit me to express the debt of gratitude that the City of Kerrville owes to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

Respectfully yours,

H. C. Geddie,
Mayor of Kerrville, Texas.[3]

With the cessation of the epidemic and the raising of the quarantine, the Sisters reopened their schools. A second outbreak of influenza in December brought another interruption in the classwork; however, it was of short duration and the eventful year of 1918 drew to a close. The proclamation of the Armistice and the return of peace, which were received with universal joy, added greatly to the welcome accorded Bishop A. J. Drossaerts, the lately appointed successor to the San Antonio See. His consecration had taken place in the old St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, on the same occasion that the Apostolic Delegate, Monseigneur Bonzano, had conferred the pallium upon Archbishop Shaw and had consecrated Right Reverend Jules B. Jeanmard, Bishop of Lafayette, Louisiana.

On December 13, Bishop Drossaerts was welcomed to his diocese;

[3] *Ibid.*

two days later, accompanied by Archbishop Shaw, Bishop Schuler of El Paso and about twenty-five priest of the diocese, he paid his first formal visit to the Convent. The guests of honor were greeted at the chapel door by Reverend Mother Mary John and her Council; as they entered the chapel the Bishop was acclaimed by the convent choir in the beautifully harmonized accents of the Church's official greeting for a bishop—"Ecce Sacerdos Magnus." "The rendition," reads a notice in the Southern Messenger, "was typical of the tradition of ecclesiastical music as performed in this House of God. The Right Reverend Bishop accompanied by His Grace, by Bishop Schuler, and by the other members of the party proceeded at once to the sanctuary. It was an inspiring spectacle, this gathering of the new Shepherd and a part of his flock before the Tabernacle of the Good Shepherd. Heaven smiled on the scene and sent its mellow evening radiance through the beautiful windows, suffusing the interior of the church with a wonderful blend of tints that quickened into life the already exquisite color effect of the interior of this far-famed gem of ecclesiastical architecture."[4] Bishop Drossaerts gave voice to the overpowering impression which the beauty of the chapel made upon him: "It bespoke the true love of God in the hearts of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, who in building their convent church had acted on the principle that nothing was too good for their Eucharistic Lord." In a few brief remarks expressive of his gratitude for the courtesy shown him, the Bishop revealed the interest, zeal, and enthusiasm he had for all that pertained to the welfare of religion. December 15 was but a prelude to the numerous occasions which have called Bishop Drossaerts to the Incarnate Word Convent, where every visit serves to manifest more clearly the interest he has in the religious congregations of his diocese.

Texas has as yet passed no coercive laws relative to the private schools; nevertheless, to prevent embarrassment in the event that

[4] *Southern Messenger*, December 26, 1918.

such legislation is enacted, Reverend Mother Mary John insisted that every teacher procure a permanent state certificate. This meant the establishment of a normal department recognized by the State. The Academy of the Incarnate Word having secured affiliation with the Catholic University in 1915 and state recognition two years later was, in 1919, placed on the list of institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Encouraged by these measures and especially by the favorable reports of the examiners who visited the school yearly, the Superiors thought the time opportune for further advancement. A visit to Austin in 1918 and an interview between Mother Columbanus and the State Superintendent of Schools resulted in the establishment of the State Summer Normal at Alamo Heights. The institution was opened not only to the various sisterhoods of the city but to secular teachers as well, fifteen of whom registered for the first year's work. From this nominal attendance of public school teachers the Incarnate Word Summer Normal has continued to increase its register until at the end of five years it showed an attendance of over two hundred secular students in addition to its four hundred religious teachers.

Following the satisfactory organization of the normal, Reverend Mother Mary John's next step was the standardizing of the Incarnate Word College. Strongly supported and assisted by Mother Kevin who as School Inspectress replaced Mother Columbanus in 1918, and by Sister Columkille, the Dean, application was made to the State Department of Education for the recognition of the institution as a junior college. On December 11, 1919, the President of the College, Father Garriga, received the following announcement:

My dear Father Garriga:

At a meeting of the State Board of Examiners held yesterday afternoon, at which the application of the College of the Incarnate Word for recognition as a junior college was considered, the Board voted unanimously in favor of recommending to the State Superintendent that this college be

placed on the list of approved junior colleges. This recommendation was submitted to Miss Annie Webb Blanton, State Superintendent of Public Education, and was formally approved and signed by her.

I am glad to be able to give the foregoing information. I wish to thank you for your very courteous treatment to me personally and officially in our interviews and correspondence relating to this subject. I trust that this State recognition may be helpful to the College of the Incarnate Word, and that this institution may take on increased vigor that may result in a larger growth and in an extended influence in the field of Christian education in Texas.

Assuring you that I shall be happy to witness the prosperity of this College, and trusting that our future relations may be as happy as those of the past, I remain with best wishes,

Yours truly,
T. G. Harris,
College Examiner.[5]

In a letter to Mother Kevin dated March 15, 1921, Miss Emma Mitchel, College Examiner, made the following statement: "We are enrolling Incarnate Word College among the senior colleges of Texas. I congratulate you on the wider field of usefulness thus open before you." The graduates of the institution were thus, according to Mr. Peyton Irving, "entitled to any and all privileges enjoyed by any college or university of Texas."[6]

Only one more recognition, that of the Southern Association of Colleges, was necessary after the Texas Association had accorded the institution a place on its affiliated list. In answer to a petition submitted to the board, which met in Richmond, Virginia, in 1923, the degrees conferred by the Incarnate Word College receive full recognition from the organization.

Thus five years of intensive effort have had their results; although the beginning was fraught with difficulties and disappointments, the Sisters, combining prayer with work, hoped for success. With an efficient staff of teachers under the direction of Sister Columkille, who became President in 1923, the foundation of a thorough classical training has been laid; the extension courses

[5] *Archives, Incarnate Word College.*

[6] The letter from the college examiner is dated February 5, 1923.

offered at convenient hours have attracted a number of religious and secular teachers, who devote their extra time to studies leading to degrees. Among the former are many Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, stationed in the parochial schools of the city.

The year 1919, which recorded the standardization of the College, witnessed the celebration of the golden jubilee of the Congregation. Fifty years having elapsed since the establishment of the Sisterhood in San Antonio, it seemed fitting to set aside a season of thanksgiving for the half century, rich in temporal and spiritual blessings. The commemorative exercises held at the Motherhouse on July 30 and 31 and on December 3, were mainly spiritual, consisting of Solemn High Mass and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Presented by the students were musical and dramatic programs, allegorical in character, in which the history of fifty years was effectively portrayed. The presence of Archbishop Shaw of New Orleans, of Bishop Drossaerts of San Antonio, Bishop Lynch of Dallas, Bishop Schuler of El Paso, Bishop Van de Ven of Alexandria, Bishop Byrne of Galveston, and more than one hundred priests from the various localities in which the Sisters were engaged, gave evidence of the appreciation accorded the work accomplished by the pioneers of 1869. The Holy See, through the Cardinal Protector of the Congregation, His Eminence Cardinal Gasquet, sent a special blessing to the Community, and congratulatory messages and good wishes came from friends throughout the country. The golden jubilee year was a season of memories and inspirations. Although not one of the founders lived to participate in this happy occasion, they were made to live again in the eloquent addresses given by Bishop Lynch, Bishop Drossaerts, and Father Tragesser. To the sorrow of the Sisters, Mother Joseph, one of the first to enter the Community and the third to receive the habit of a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, died a few months before the jubilee celebration. From one little adobe house opened by Reverend Mother St. Pierre, Reverend Mother Madeleine, and Sister Agnes, she had seen the establishments in charge of the Congregation increase to sixty;

from a little community of three the religious family had grown to six hundred and sixty-three.

Although Reverend Mother Mary John shared the joy of the Sisters, the event implied a deeper significance than rejoicing over increased numbers and multiplied works. For her it was not environment, successful achievements, or material prosperity that gave stability to a congregation; it was the inner life of every religious exemplified by her observance of charity and obedience that counted for the sanctity and worth of a community. Convinced of this truth, Reverend Mother sought to make the second half-century of the Congregation's existence a renewal of the spirit brought to Texas soil in 1869; "a rededication," as Cardinal Gibbons wrote in his congratulatory letter, "to the service of the Incarnate Word." [7]

The Sisters, while commemorating the events of the past, did not forget the unselfish deeds and generous sympathy of the pioneer priests of Texas, nor were they unmindful of the loyalty and gratitude due the clergy of a later generation. In thanksgiving for all the blessings received, Santa Rosa Hospital endowed a room for the use of the invalid priests of the San Antonio diocese.

The summer of 1918 having passed, the Sisters found themselves again on their missions. Schools and hospitals were following the usual round of duties; "Home" was looking forward to the arrival of the monthly letter from each institution. Suddenly, on September 14, the peace and calm of community life was interrupted by the report of a disastrous storm then raging on the Texas coast. Instinctively every mind reverted to the Galveston flood of 1900, and few at the convent on Alamo Heights slept that night. About eleven o'clock word was received in San Antonio that Corpus Christi was the center of the storm. Immediately one of the former students of the Incarnate Word College

[7] *Letter from Cardinal Gibbons to Reverend Mother Mary John,* May 15, 1919.

attempted to communicate with Mother George, the Superioress of Spohn's Sanitarium; but as all telephone wires with one exception were blown down, it was mid-day Monday before she succeeded. Mother George, answering the call herself, stated that the hospital was totally wrecked and Sister Thias was missing. While anxiously awaiting details Reverend Mother Mary John prepared for an immediate departure for the stricken city; all railroad communication had been interrupted, therefore it was many hours before she and Mother Wendelinus secured accommodations on a relief train. More than three thousand had been rendered homeless and probably penniless by the storm; consequently, all agencies were called upon to assist in caring for the needy. Reverend Mother found the community and their patients domiciled in the Kennedy home, which had been converted into an emergency hospital.

The account of the storm as told by the San Antonio papers and verified by the Sisters is as follows:

"The storm accompanied by heavy rain broke in all its fury about two o'clock Sunday morning; between ten and eleven o'clock the waters of the Neuces Bay, north and northeast of the city, had poured across the country cutting off escape to the bluffs, or higher portions of the city. An hour later, Corpus Christi Bay, on the east side, was rising rapidly, the waters being driven by the high wind from the northeast. At noon the bath-house of the Sanitarium was washed away, and other buildings began to float around in the wild and rapidly rising waters. It was then thought advisable to move as many of the patients as possible to the south wing of the Sanitarium, which was not so much exposed to the wind and waves. The rocking of the building terrified the inmates who expected every moment would be their last; they were cut off from escape to the city and the water around them was mounting higher and higher. While some of the Sisters remained on duty with the patients, others repaired to the chapel on the second floor in the southeast wing of the building, where Monseigneur Jaillet recited the rosary and the prayers for the dying. Confessions were heard about four o'clock. At that time Sister Bruno, in going to relieve one of the Sisters on duty in the north wing, was knocked down several times as she passed a connecting hallway, the windows of which had been blown out. Shortly after four o'clock a terrible crash occurred. The north wing was split open, the roof fell in, and the wreckage was swept away by the flood, carrying with it Sister

Thias, Miss Teresa Reece, and two patients—one a paralytic and the other an employee of the Corpus Christi power-house who had been hurt in an explosion. Sister Thias was waiting on the patients when the crash came; her remains were found later at Portland, ten miles from Corpus Christi.

By this time the water in the building was more than three feet deep and was rising rapidly. The front of the main building had been swept away and between five and six o'clock the chapel porch was carried off. A little before six the Sacred Host, reserved in the tabernacle, was consumed by Monseigneur Jaillet, who had scarcely left the chapel when the wing began to go to pieces; at eight o'clock there was another crash and the entire wing disappeared. Only four rooms now remained. The wind, changing to the west, sent the great smokestack of the boiler-room crashing through the roof and ceiling. The debris struck one of the patients and pinioned Sister Aloysius beneath the wreckage; it was only by cutting away a part of her habit that she was released. With two more rooms gone, Sisters and patients grouped themselves in their close quarters until aid arrived the next day. Between six and seven o'clock while trying to reach the Sanitarium where his sister was a patient, Mr. Bourne was drowned a short distance from the building. An hour later Mr. McChristian, who during the night had by means of a field glass watched the lights in the Sanitarium, brought word to the community that boats were being made in the city and that aid would soon come. It was noon before rescuers arrived. With a few patients and a Sister in each boat, the relief-workers rowed to the court-house, where efforts were made to communicate with the relatives of the sick. Those who had none to care for them were given hospitality by Mrs. Prue, a devoted friend of the Sisters. The following day, when the John Kennedy home on the bluffs was placed at the disposal of the community, Mother George and her staff of nurses opened a temporary hospital for the sick and wounded refugees." [8]

The arrival of Reverend Mother Mary John and Mother Wendelinus brought relief to the overwrought nuns. Despite her desire to send the Sisters away from Corpus Christi and replace them with another corps of nurses, Reverend Mother finally yielded to their request and allowed them to continue their duties. The death of Sister Thias occasioned great grief among her Sisters; her body, identified by the habit, was recovered, and the community had the consolation of confiding it to consecrated ground.

The destruction of the Sanitarium and the losses sustained by the community were only a part of the disasters of that fateful

[8] *Southern Messenger*, San Antonio, September 25, 1919.

day. Five hundred persons were reported dead; thousands were rendered homeless, . . . churches and schools were severely damaged; sorrow and misery were everywhere apparent. Yet the disaster brought out in strong lines the generous and self-sacrificing spirit of the citizens of Corpus Christi. "The sight is inspiring," wrote Father Mark, C. P. "The charity manifested in these days of stress cannot but cover a multitude of sins committed in the days of prosperity."[9] In the hastily improvised hospital the work of caring for the sick continued long after the city began to recover from the immediate effects of the storm. Crowded conditions and insufficient equipment tended to increase the difficulties of Mother George and her Sister nurses, who awaited definite instructions from the Motherhouse. For some time Reverend Mother and her Council contemplated closing the hospital and recalling the Sisters to San Antonio, for heavy expenses lately incurred by the Congregation made it impossible to consider the reconstruction of Spohn Sanitarium. When Bishop Ledvina, the successor of Bishop Nussbaum, whom ill health forced to resign from his See, heard of the decision, he addressed himself to Reverend Mother Mary John and offered to assist the Community to rebuild the hospital. The citizens having added their plea to the Bishop's, the administration decided to construct a brick building on the site donated for the purpose by Mrs. H. H. King of Kingsville, Texas. The high elevation on the bluffs above the bay promised not only an ideal location but a safe one as well.

While work was progressing in Corpus Christi, the community in San Antonio was preparing for the opening of the new Santa Rosa Annex. The increasing demands of doctors and patients had necessitated the erection, in 1920, of a five-storied building adjoining the original hospital. Every facility known to science and architecture was employed in making the handsome Tudor-Gothic structure conform strictly to the requirements of the American College of Surgeons, and Santa Rosa's friends vied with one

[9] *Southern Messenger*, September 25, 1919.

another in furnishing the apartments of the sick in an attractive and home-like manner.

When the annex was completed the striking contrast between the new and the old, as well as the desire to render the entire structure fireproof, led Reverend Mother Mary John to undertake the reconstruction of the original buildings. Under the supervision of Mother Robert, Superioress of the hospital, arrangements were made for the removal of all wood partitions and the substitution of metal laths, for the laying of asbestolith floors, and for the construction of another story to be devoted exclusively to surgery. One of the most attractive features of the latter addition was the orthopedic ward, equipped for the accommodation of the crippled children of the city.

In spite of the many facilities offered by the hospitals and sanitariums in San Antonio, previous to 1920, little had been done towards organizing an institution which would be devoted exclusively to the care of children. Realizing this particular need Mother Robert and her staff of Sister nurses conceived the idea of devoting a ward in the new hospital wing to the use of little ones requiring surgical treatment. The plan won the immediate support of the doctors, as well as of the ladies of the city, who were desirous of cooperating in the movement. The Crippled Children's Association was formed, pledged to support and equip the department and to provide the necessary braces for the patients.

The vastness, completeness, and efficiency of Santa Rosa are factors which rejoice the heart of every member of the Community, for they represent the toil, sacrifice, and charity of the founders. They are the embodiment of the idea Reverend Mother Madeleine and Reverend Mother St. Pierre conceived during the early days of the institution's history. True, in the simplicity of their minds they thought not of the greatness that would result from their endeavors, but the spirit they bequeathed to their daughters lives in their successors.

This thought found expression during the suit instituted against

the hospital by the City of San Antonio in 1918. Basing its right to exemption from taxation on the fact that it was a charitable institution, Santa Rosa had ceased paying the taxes on its property. Under the Mayor Black administration the Community was sued. The decision of Judge Terrel that Santa Rosa is a charitable institution and therefore exempt from taxation was reversed in the Fourth Court of Civil Appeals. Carried to the Supreme Court, the verdict of the Appellate Court was set aside and that of the Trial Court upheld. Judge Blanks made the sole issue the determination whether or not under the constitution and laws Santa Rosa property is exempt from taxation. "The court does not agree with the finding of the appellate judges, that a charitable institution to be exempt from taxation must be founded exclusively upon gratuities or donations, or that it loses its exempt status because it goes in debt for its plant and pays its debts out of its earnings."[10] The profits of the Santa Rosa enterprise were proven to be utilized for purposes only that fell within the scope of the charities and the benefactions of the hospital itself. Judge Blanks paid tribute to the self-sacrifice of the Sisters and approved the wisdom which led them to provide for the training of their successors.[11]

The decision of the Supreme Court concerns all who are interested in private institutions that serve the public. Coming at a time of more or less partisan and religious strife, the action of the official of the highest court in Texas will have a far-reaching effect, even outside the State, in safeguarding the interest of private institutions of different character and encouraging those who devote their lives to the service of humanity.

In fighting the case of exemption from taxation the Superiors of Santa Rosa felt they were defending the rights of similar institutions. The decision of the court of 1924 meant continued existence for certain hospitals which, struggling to maintain their

[10] *Community Records.*
[11] *Idem.*

standards, would in the event that taxes were added to their burdens, have ceased their ministrations.

An editorial in the local paper voiced the sentiments of the friends of Santa Rosa:

"The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word are to be congratulated on their victory. Santa Rosa Infirmary stands to-day as a monument to fifty years of service given to Texas by these noble women. This thoroughly modern institution, representing a half-century of unceasing toil and unremitting sacrifice . . . is now the pride of San Antonio, and equal to any standardized hospital in America. That such long service in alleviating the sufferings of humanity, in administrating to the wants of the unfortunates without regard to race, color, or financial condition, should not be regarded by some officials as charity, but as service maintained for profit, is to be regretted. Yet it is distinctly gratifying to realize that the judges of the Supreme Court of this State have a clear concept of Christian charity, a right understanding of sacrificial service, and an appreciative sense of justice to women." [12]

While meeting the needs of the hospital, Reverend Mother Mary John did not neglect the interests of the Incarnate Word College. The large enrollment of students which followed the recognition of the various standardizing agencies made the erection of a new building an absolute necessity. On the feast of St. Joseph, 1921, ground was broken on the Alamo Heights property for the new building, the cornerstone of which was blessed by Bishop A. J. Drossaerts, December 3, 1921. Constructed of steel and reinforced concrete, with dark red brick and white stone trimmings, the building, which is divided into three sections, affords accommodation for the students of the college and high school departments. Practical, hygienic, and at the same time ornamental, the structure bespeaks the methodical, common-sense mind of Mother Alphonse, who guided the architect in the drafting of the plans. Although the greater part of the burden fell upon Mother Wendelinus, the Treasurer of the Congregation, it is safe to state that few enterprises were better or more efficiently supervised than was the Incarnate Word College. The business ability of Mother Wen-

[12] *Southern Messenger*, March 20, 1924.

delinus will be better appreciated when it is realized that while directing the construction of the college she was at the same time controlling the financial arrangements of the Santa Rosa Hospital and Spohn's Sanitarium, Corpus Christi. There were times when her patience was taxed to the utmost, for conditions in the financial world were critical and money was lending at a high rate of interest; nevertheless, quietly and persistently she made her plans, brought all to a satisfactory issue, and as a consequence broadened the work of the Congregation.

The new college building was opened in the fall of 1923. On September 15, Mass of the Holy Ghost was offered by the chaplain, Reverend G. P. Mulvaney, whose services the community was fortunate in securing for the department of philosophy.

The untiring efforts of the faculty have maintained the distinctive ideal set forth by the institution from its inception; namely, the correlation of correct mental habits with the matter of education. It aims not only to train its students in the acquisition of learning, but also to direct them in the rightful use of its acquisition. This aim is realized in the true educational methods; the economy that provides full and free inquiry for the student in the subjects pursued, with the healthy moral restraints imposed by a cultivated self-discipline.[13]

That the standards of Incarnate Word College have made a general appeal to Catholic womanhood is evidenced by the two hundred and seventy students whose names were inscribed on the register for 1924.

[13] *Bulletin of the Incarnate Word College*, p. 6, San Antonio, 1924.

## CHAPTER XV.

### Reorganization of the Congregation.—The Provinces.

1924.

During the sessions of the General Chapter, held at the Motherhouse in the summer of 1909, the delegates were asked to express their opinion regarding the advisability of dividing the Congregation into provinces. True, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word are comparatively few; nevertheless, their missions are distributed over a vast extent of territory. With a view towards facilitating the work of the Superioress-General the consensus of opinion among the delegates was for the provinces. However, before the necessary financial arrangements were effected, several years passed during which the permission of the Holy See was sought. In 1921 Reverend Mother Mary John's community letter announced to the Sisters that the administration was authorized by Rome to establish four provinces, the centers of which should be San Antonio, Mexico City, St. Louis, and New Orleans. This required a reorganization of the Congregation, an undertaking which received Reverend Mother's whole-hearted attention.

The Motherhouse, while remaining the seat of the Generalate, was designated the provincial house for the San Antonio province; arrangements were made to secure sites in Missouri and Mexico; and the vice-province of New Orleans was placed provisionally under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Superioress of the San Antonio section. Serving with Mother Nativity who was appointed to this office, were her Consulters, Mother Alexis and Mother Crescentia, and the Treasurer, Mother Mary of Calvary; Mother Antoninus was Mistress of Novices.

While these arrangements were pending, Reverend Mother Mary John was called upon to make several foundations in Texas. An invitation from Bishop Schuler, lately appointed to the newly erected diocese of El Paso, brought the Sisters to the West, where

they accepted the care of St. Margaret's Orphanage. El Paso, a picturesque border town, figured prominently in the early history of the Southwest, its location on the Old Spanish Trail making it a convenient stopping place for the caravans of traders and settlers who journeyed between Santa Fe and Mexico City. With the advent of modern methods of trade and industry the western types—cowboys, miners, and pioneers—gradually disappeared and El Paso today is a railroad center controlling an extensive commerce with California and Mexico. That the erection and organization of educational and benevolent institutions have claimed Bishop Schuler's personal attention was evidenced by his early appeal in behalf of St. Margaret's Orphanage. On September 10, 1919, Sister Pudentiana and her companions arrived in El Paso. As the orphanage was yet unfurnished, they accepted an invitation from the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and remained at Hotel Dieu. A few days after their arrival the Superioress General of the Sisters of Loretto, who conduct St. Joseph's Academy and three parochial schools in the city, called to extend a courteous welcome to the community. St. Margaret's was soon ready for occupancy and on October 17, the first Mass was offered in its neat little chapel by Father Cuenca, S. J.; the day following, the Bishop, accompanied by Fathers Cummings, Fields, and Upton, members of the Society of Jesus, blessed the house. Although accommodations are limited, the Bishop, who takes a personal interest in St. Margaret's, has already made several additions to the building.

A few days after the community left for El Paso, five Sisters were sent at the invitation of Father O'Slattery, to St. Francis de Sales School, New Orleans. On October 27, the large well-equipped building, lately renovated and remodeled, was blessed by Archbishop Shaw, who heartily welcomed the Sisters to the archdiocese. Three hundred and sixty-five pupils were received on registration day, and the number increased so rapidly that two Sisters were added to the teaching faculty the following year. At the request of the late Father Twellmeyer, former superintendent

of the New Orleans parochial schools, Sister Peter Nolasco gave a course in primary methods to the teachers attending the Loyola Summer Normal.

When St. Mary's parish, San Antonio, was divided in 1919, Father M. S. Garriga was appointed pastor of the section now known as St. Cecilia's. A friend of the Sisters from his boyhood, he was ordained by Archbishop Shaw in the Incarnate Word Chapel, where he also celebrated his first Mass. Shortly after returning from Europe, where during the World War he made a remarkable record as chaplain of the One Hundred and Forty-fourth Infantry, Thirty-sixth Division, he was appointed to the chaplaincy of the Santa Rosa Infirmary, an office he held until called upon to organize the newly established parish. His request for teachers came at a time when Reverend Mother Mary John found it difficult to meet his requirements, nevertheless, assured that the school enrollment would not exceed seventy, she promised to send the Sisters in the autumn. Sister John Berchmanns and three Sisters began St. Cecilia's School in a little cottage on McKinley Avenue, October 19, 1921. As the proposed convent was used temporarily as a church, the community resided with the Sisters at St. Peter's Orphanage until the combination church and school building was completed. On the last Sunday of November Bishop Drossaerts, assisted by the faculty and student body of St. John's Theological Seminary, of which institution Father Garriga was at one time vice-rector, performed the ceremonies of dedication. Classes were then conducted in the neatly furnished school, and the Sisters took up their residence in a cottage located on a corner of the parish property. The promised "seventy pupils," soon reached one hundred and twenty-five, and the faculty, proportionally increased, has established a reputation for thoroughness and efficiency. The graduates from the eighth grade are admitted to the Incarnate Word High School, where they easily maintain a standing among the best.

Another parochial school opened in San Antonio was St. Ann's on Beacon Hill. Father Nichols, the pastor, was no stranger to

the Community, his years of service in San Angelo, where the Sisters conduct the Immaculate Conception School and St. John's Sanitarium, having acquainted him with its methods and ability. In September, 1923, Sister Bethania and three Sisters began the organization of classes. As the parish is small but growing, no one expected a large enrollment; nevertheless, on the second day, despite the absence of desks and other school furnishings, one hundred and two boys and girls reported for registration; before the end of the scholastic year one hundred and fifty pupils were in daily attendance. The cooperation of Father Nichols in the work of the school, and his efforts to provide everything necessary for its efficient operation, have made St. Ann's a promising and well patronized institution. As in the case of St. Cecilia's, many of the girls who complete the grammar grades enter the Incarnate Word High School, and the boys are received in the high school department of St. Mary's College, conducted by the Brothers of Mary.

In the summer of 1923 the Jesuit Fathers requested Reverend Mother to send Sisters to their school in Ysleta, Texas. Formerly this institution had been conducted by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, whose Superior had, within the past year, recalled them to the Motherhouse in Spain. Complying with the request, Sister Angelina and five Sisters departed for Ysleta, which Garrison considers the oldest town in Texas. "It began as a village of Tiguex Indians, who were friendly to the Spaniards, and who were driven from Isleta in New Mexico in 1680. They were settled by Governor Otermin in a pueblo which was within twelve miles from El Paso, and which was called Isleta after the name of the Mexican settlement the Indians had been forced to abandon. The town had no importance in the life of Texas, which has grown from another quarter; but it had a continuous existence dating from the year 1682."[1]

Ysleta[2] has a charm and attraction for the artist as well as for

[1] GARRISON, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[2] Texas has retained the old method of spelling.

the archaeologist; it lies quite close to the border, beyond which is Old Mexico, whose purple ranges of the Sierra Madre in the south rival the rugged spurs of the Rockies to the north. It is connected with El Paso by an electric interurban railway, at the end of which stands the Academy, an imposing building with an artistic façade and gleaming white columns. Although but two years have passed since the Sisters entered Ysleta, the attendance at the Academy has grown from ninety to one hundred and fifty pupils.

Other institutions opened were St. Rita's School, Ranger; and St. Boniface School, Scotland, Texas.

While supervising and directing these undertakings Reverend Mother Mary John found time to give her personal attention to the foundation of the two provincial houses. On the feast of St. Francis Xavier, 1920, accompanied by Mother Loyola, she took possession of the lately purchased property in Tacubaya, a suburb of Mexico City. The house is one of the noble, old-style Mexican edifices, with a large patio and a stairway leading up to a corridor that winds arounds its palm and flower-banked sides. Miniature lakes and aged eucalyptus trees are set in the midst of a tropical garden, enclosed by a high wall over which run a wealth of ivy and geraniums. Large handsome rooms, well-lighted after the Mexican fashion, open on the corridor from which there is an unrivaled view of the famous Park and Castle of Chapultepec.

On December 8, the aged Archbishop of Mexico, Most Reverend José Mora y del Rio, blessed the house; and the first Mass was offered therein on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of Mexico. Reverend Mother Mary John and the Sisters were welcomed by a score of friends; among them were Bishop Valdespino and Father Cabello, the latter presenting the community with a beautiful desk which during the days of the Revolution had been used as a place of concealment for the Blessed Sacrament. With the permission of the Archbishop the novitiate was formally established, March 21, 1921, on which day three young ladies were admitted to the postulate. Before many weeks had passed the

number was increased to twenty-one, all of whom were placed under the care of Mother Loyola. Just one year after the blessing of Nazareth Novitiate, as the institution has been called, the auxiliary Bishop of Mexico, Right Reverend Maximino Ruiz, gave the habit to five novices who received the names, Sister Maria de San José, Sister M. Cecilia, Sister M. Ines, Sister M. de Guadalupe, and Sister Maria del Verbo Encarnado.

With the arrival of Mother Avellina who was named local Superioress, Father R. J. Garcia Luna, an enthusiastic social worker, obtained permission for the ladies of Tacubaya to meet at the convent weekly. Although the primal object of the organization is to sew for the poor, Father Garcia uses it as an opportunity to instruct the members of the Circle in the truths of their religion. The Annals of the first Christmas celebrated by the community in the provincial house record the joy of two hundred and fifty little children who, gathered in the patio, heard Mass and received the gifts prepared for them.

In the fall of 1922, Mother Berchmanns who was appointed the Provincial Superioress received her staff of assistants: Mother Loyola and Mother Avellina, Consulters, Mother Marcellina, Treasurer, and Mother Mercedes, Mistress of Novices. Mother Loyola who was also the Secretary, replaced Mother Avellina as local Superioress. Within the boundaries of the province there were at the time of its foundation seventy-seven Sisters in nine houses; this number has been increased by the opening of the Incarnate Word Academy in Tacubaya and Colegio del Verbo Encarnado in Puebla.

The blessings of success which attended Reverend Mother Mary John's efforts in Mexico were equalled by those which resulted from her mission in St. Louis, where, in the summer of 1921, eight acres of land in Normandy, Missouri, were purchased by the Congregation. In October, 1923, eight additional acres adjoining the original site were secured. Formerly a part of the Lucas estate, the property, now called Our Lady's Mount, was ideal as to location and surroundings, its handsome old maples, cottonwood, and

gum trees, two hundred and seventy-eight in all, making a magnificent retreat for the Incarnate Word Novitiate. Though simple, the building is beautiful and attractive and was supervised during the course of its construction by Father Bradley, pastor of the Blessed Sacrament parish. To him the Sisters are indebted for the thorough and efficient manner in which the work was performed. Normandy is several miles from Northland Avenue, St. Louis, nevertheless, he visited the building daily and assured himself that the plans were conscientiously followed. In the autumn of 1922 the convent and novitiate were completed and placed in charge of Mother Casimir, the Provincial Superioress, who was assisted by Mother William and Mother Alcantara, her Consulters, and Mother Mary Clare, the Mistress of Novices.

On September 22, Reverend Mother Mary John, accompanied by Mother Casimir, called on Archbishop Glennon. His Grace, who seemed pleased to learn that the Sisters were to remain in St. Louis, remarked that Sisters were sorely needed for the schools. With his usual courtesy he consented to bless the provincial house on the following Sunday, September 24, 1922. The clergy were invited to Our Lady's Mount for the dedication services and a great concourse of people assembled on the grounds. Archbishop Glennon was assisted by Father Bradley, Father J. P. Spencer, Father B. J. O'Flynn; by Father J. J. Sullivan and Father J. J. Cronin, members of the Congregation of the Mission; and by Father Gerald and Father Edmund, Passionists. Present also were delegations from the various Sisterhoods, among whom were the Superioress-General of the Sisters of St. Joseph, from Carondelet, and the Sister Visitatrix from Marillac. Mother Casimir and her community at Our Lady's Mount will never forget the kindness of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul.

Three days after the blessing, Father Bradley offered the first Mass in the convent chapel; the acolytes were brought from his own parish and the music was excellently rendered by a choir of ladies and gentlemen from Blessed Sacrament Church. As no chaplain was assigned, the Sisters were obliged to go daily to Marillac

or to the German Orphanage conducted by the Sisters of Christian Charity. Frequently in the cold and darkness of a mid-winter morning, finding the roads impassable, they were obliged to return to their convent without hearing Mass. Their patience and sacrifices were rewarded in April, 1923, when they were informed that the Franciscan Fathers would offer Mass daily at the Mount. In the autumn of that same year the duties of the chaplain were assumed by Father Tragesser, Provincial Superior of the Society of Mary, who since that date has been the spiritual guide of the community.

The first postulants were brought to the Incarnate Word Novitiate, Normandy, by Reverend Mother in March, 1923, when, returning to the United States with eleven young ladies from Ireland, she stopped at Our Lady's Mount. Four of the candidates having requested permission to remain, Reverend Mother willingly consented. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception they received the habit from Father Tragesser and with it the names Sister Mary of the Incarnate Word, Sister Marie Immaculata, Sister Mary Joseph, and Sister Mary Brigid.

The steady growth of the novitiate has enabled the community to look forward to an increase in the number of houses. When the division was made, the St. Louis Province had within its limits five hospitals, five schools, and two orphanages conducted by one hundred and thirteen Sisters. The number of schools was increased in 1924, when at the invitation of Father Daly, Sisters were sent to Old Mines, Missouri.

The entrance of Sister Ernest and her companions upon the scene of their future labors was a memorable event. At De Soto, a railroad station eighteen miles outside Old Mines, they were met by the pastor and a delegation of parishioners, who had provided automobiles for the remainder of the journey. "The scenic beauty of that road between De Soto and Old Mines must be seen to be appreciated," wrote one of the Sisters. "The grand old hills on one side and the deep valleys on the other, made Sister Ernest declare that she thought she was again in Killarney." At the

entrance to the town more parishioners, headed by the members of St. Joseph's Society, the latter mounted and in full regalia, joined the procession to the convent. There the ladies served the Sisters with a substantial dinner, after which everyone repaired to the church for the recitation of the Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. St. Joachim's Church built a century ago, was filled to capacity with the members of the parish, many of whom had left their offices and occupations in order to welcome the Sisters. The fact that Old Mines had no Catholic school during the last one hundred years helps to account for the enthusiasm displayed on August 20. The neat school building, which was blessed September 10, is a credit to Father Daly and his devoted people, for they have spared no expense in furnishing it with all modern appliances.

The repeated requests of Father Barrett, pastor of Macon, Missouri, were likewise answered in the latter part of 1924, when Reverend Mother Mary John sent Mother Bridget and three Sisters to take charge of the Immaculate Conception School in that city. The building, formerly the private residence of a colonel, was purchased by the parish and equipped for school and church purposes. Like Old Mines, Macon had been without a parochial school for generations, during which time not a few mothers and fathers have drifted from the practice of their religion. An evidence of this fact was given the Sisters a short time after their arrival. Two members of the community were returning from a shopping excursion when they were met by a group of little boys, the youngest of whom asked, "What kind of school are you going to have up there?" Invited to visit the Sisters, the lad replied, "My name is Tommy Malloy and I'm a Methodist; I'll come to see you, though, and bring mother; she used to belong to your church." Tommy is typical of many who, since the arrival of the Sisters, have discovered their relationship with the faith of their fathers. Before the opening of school on September 2, practically all the citizens of Macon called at the convent to greet the Sisters. "The population is small," wrote Mother Bridget, "but everyone is

remarkably refined and courteous.'' The main factor of this enthusiasm is Father Barrett, whose noble qualities have made him a friend of Catholic and Protestant alike.

To the initiative of Monsignor Luttrell of St. Thomas Aquinas parish, Chicago, was due the opening of a school in Cicero, Illinois. A personal friend of Father J. Kelly, the pastor of St. Frances of Rome Church, Father Luttrell had advised him to apply to Reverend Mother Mary John for teachers. In the early part of August, Mother Columbanus and Sister Cornelia, a cousin of Father Luttrell, arrived in Chicago, where they were invited to remain with the Sisters of Mercy and make the retreat. Father Kelly was absent from the city, but his sister, a member of the Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy, was extremely kind and helpful. With the return of the pastor the Sisters were conducted to Cicero, a suburb of Chicago, which all but trebled its population during the last decade. The combination church and school dedicated to St. Frances of Rome is located on Austin Boulevard and Fifteenth Street, and the convent, a two-storied, twelve-roomed building, is a block further south on the Boulevard. All that kindness and thoughtfulness could suggest were embodied in the furnishing of the convent, the chapel having received the special attention of the pastor. On the opening day of school, the Sisters registered seventy-five pupils and before the end of September two hundred and twenty-five. Mother Columbanus and her assistants were in Cicero but a short time when Father Kozlowski, the superintendent of schools, visited the community and welcomed them in the name of His Eminence Cardinal Mundelein, the bishops and clergy of the archdiocese.

The opening of St. Frances of Rome School culminates the record of foundations made in 1924.[3] Reverend Mother Mary John's first term of office had come to a close, but the General Chapter, convened in July, re-elected her to the office of Superioress General; Mother Alphonse remained the Assistant General,

[3] At the invitation of Reverend Ignatius Feley, Sisters will take charge of St. Agnes' School, Baltimore, Maryland, in September, 1925.

and Mother Bonaventure, Secretary; the other members of the Council were Mother Avellina, Mother William, Mother Jacinta, and Mother Kevin. According to the revised Constitutions, the offices of Inspectress General of Schools and Hospitals are to be entrusted to members of the Council, an arrangement which, in the eyes of the delegates, will secure efficiency and will maintain uniformity in the educational and benevolent institutions conducted by the Congregation. Mother Kevin and Mother William, who hold these respective positions, have been identified with their particular fields for many years, during which they have become intimately acquainted with every aspect relative to their departments. Mother William was stationed at Santa Rosa and other hospitals of the Community until her appointment to the office of Inspectress in August, 1918. From that date her interests have not been confined to the material improvement of the institutions but have been extended to the advancement of the individual Sisters, many of whom at her suggestion have been sent to pursue courses in the various medical colleges in the United States. The election of Mother Kevin, whose work has been referred to frequently in these pages, was received with deep satisfaction by those desirous of having in the office of Inspectress of Schools, one whose theoretical and practical training will enable her to make her influence felt in the lives of the individual teachers, through well devised plans for their professional improvement.

In selecting Mother Avellina and Mother Jacinta the delegates gave Reverend Mother Mary John two assistants who are ready to second every movement that tends towards religious and intellectual advancement. Mother Avellina who was born and educated in Niedersalbach, Germany, entered the Community in December 1892. An artist of no small ability, she studied under Professor Onderdonk and later took courses in the Art Conservatory, St. Paul, Minnesota. Her years of cooperation with the Sisters and students of the academies in the United States and Mexico have given her wide experience in the affairs of the Congregation.

Mother Jacinta, a native of Monterey, Mexico, graduated from Colegio San José of that city, and entered the novitiate in San Antonio, March 15, 1900. A few years excepted, her religious life has been passed in the schools of Mexico where she has made a thorough study of the educational problems and needs of her country.

The members of the new administration entered immediately upon their duties. The Congregation which they governed now numbered seven hundred and eighty-three members employed in seventy-four establishments. These comprise the Motherhouse, three provincial houses and novitiates, a college, seventeen academies, thirty-five parochial schools, ten hospitals, five orphanages, and one home for the aged. The pupils in the schools average nine thousand three hundred and twenty-four, two hundred and seventy of whom are registered students at the Incarnate Word College. The yearly records of the orphanages show an average of three hundred and sixty-three children received. The number of patients cared for yearly is ten thousand one hundred and fifty-one and the files of the Santa Rosa Clinic record six thousand and ninety-five cases treated. According to the revised Constitutions, the care of the aged is no longer one of the works of the Congregation.

The same spirit of charity and zeal which actuated the founders characterizes the administration of today. The ideal brought into the social life of Texas—the ideal of a band of women devoted to the care of their neighbor in hospitals, and orphanages,—is as sacred as it was in 1869, when the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word made their first foundation in San Antonio. Although organized primarily for the care of the sick and homeless, the Sisters, at the instigation of Bishop Pellicer, the first Bishop of the diocese, entered the field of education. "There," wrote Archbishop Shaw, "they have been valiant auxiliaries of the Church and her clergy in forming souls to God after the model of the Incarnate Word. Everywhere the same untiring zeal distinguishes

these champions of Christian education, whether they are in the little country school with often the poorest of God's little ones as their pupils, or in the imposing convent or college amid more congenial surroundings and scholars perchance more responsive.

"The Sisters of to-day love the little waifs and strays just as tenderly. The sick and the suffering find in their hospitals the same skilful care and loving attention. Fifty years ago education in a parish school was a blessing the pioneer missionaries dreamed of but did not hope for in their day. Thanks to the labors and privations of the various Sisterhoods, among whom the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word have borne no small share of the burden of the heats of the day, the boon of a Christian education has been diffused far and wide in Texas and other Southern States, and the little ones of Christ are coming into their birthright and inheritance. To-day the lamp of science burns more brightly than ever in the halls of learning of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and its rays point unerringly the way to that Light of Light, the Incarnate Word, who enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."[4]

[4] *Letter of Archbishop Shaw to Reverend Mother Mary John*, June 9, 1919.

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# APPENDIX.

## Institutions in Charge of the Congregation.

(Statistics of 1923-1924.)

### SAN ANTONIO PROVINCE.

| School or Academy | No. of Sisters | Lay Teachers | No. of Pupils |
|---|---|---|---|
| **San Antonio City:** | | | |
| Motherhouse, Incarnate Word Convent and Novitiate | 92 | | |
| San Fernande's School | 4 | | 220 |
| Incarnate Word College | 43 | 7 | 462 |
| St. Philip's School | 4 | | 186 |
| St. Patrick's Academy | 9 | | 150 |
| St. Cecilia's School | 7 | | 217 |
| Our Lady of Guadalupe School | 8 | | 365 |
| San Francisco School | 3 | | 67 |
| St. Ann's School | 6 | | 200 |
| **Outside of San Antonio—** | | | |
| *Bandera:* | | | |
| St. Joseph's School | 5 | | 110 |
| *Boerne:* | | | |
| Holy Angels' School | 4 | | 40 |
| *Cestochowa:* | | | |
| St. Joseph's School | 3 | | 70 |
| *Hobson:* | | | |
| St. Boniface's School | 4 | | 80 |
| *Kerrville:* | | | |
| Notre Dame Institute | 7 | | 90 |
| Guadalupe School | 2 | | 75 |
| *Kosciusko:* | | | |
| St. Ann's School | 3 | | 83 |
| *Marshall:* | | | |
| St. Joseph's Institute— (Training School for boys) | 8 | | 24 |
| *Panna Maria:* | | | |
| St. Joseph's School | 3 | | 86 |
| *San Angelo:* | | | |
| Immaculate Conception School | 7 | | 105 |
| *St. Hedwig:* | | | |
| St. Joseph's School | 3 | | 160 |
| *Yorktown:* | | | |
| St. Mary's School | 4 | | 110 |

## ST. LOUIS PROVINCE.

| School or Academy | No. of Sisters | Lay Teachers | No. of Pupils |
|---|---|---|---|
| *St. Louis City:* | | | |
| Incarnate Word Convent and Novitiate | 17 | | |
| Blessed Sacrament School | 16 | | 600 |
| *Cicero, Ill.:* | | | |
| St. Frances of Rome School | 6 | | 224 |
| *Jefferson City, Mo.:* | | | |
| Immaculate Conception School | 7 | | 225 |
| *Macon, Mo.:* | | | |
| Immaculate Conception School | 5 | | 60 |
| *Norman, Okla.:* | | | |
| St. Joseph's School | 8 | | 118 |
| *Paris, Texas:* | | | |
| Notre Dame Academy | 5 | | 50 |
| *Old Mines, Mo.:* | | | |
| St. Joachim's School | 4 | | 150 |
| *Taos, Mo.:* | | | |
| St. Francis Xavier's School | 4 | | 91 |

## NEW ORLEANS VICE-PROVINCE.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Amarillo, Texas:* | | | |
| St. Mary's Academy | 13 | | 180 |
| *Del Rio, Texas:* | | | |
| Our Lady of Guadalupe School | 5 | | 300 |
| Sacred Heart Academy | 7 | | 107 |
| *Fort Worth, Texas:* | | | |
| All Saints' Academy | 7 | | 34 |
| Mount Carmel Academy | 9 | | 165 |
| *Marfa, Texas:* | | | |
| Guadalupe School | 5 | | 120 |
| *New Orleans, La.:* | | | |
| St. Francis de Sales School | 9 | | 324 |
| *Seguin, Texas:* | | | |
| St. James' School | 3 | | 80 |
| Our Lady of Guadalupe School | 2 | | 150 |
| *Ranger, Texas:* | | | |
| St. Rita's School | 7 | | 115 |
| *Scotland, Texas:* | | | |
| St. Boniface's School | 5 | | 114 |
| *Windthorst, Texas:* | | | |
| St. Mary's School | 6 | | 175 |
| *Ysleta, Texas:* | | | |
| Incarnate Word Academy | 6 | | 150 |

## MEXICAN PROVINCE.

| School or Academy | No. of Sisters | Lay Teachers | No. of Pupils |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Tacubaya:* | | | |
| Incarnate Word Convent and Nazareth Novitiate | 36 | | |
| Incarnate Word Academy | 10 | | 200 |
| *Chihuahua:* | | | |
| Academia del Verbo Encarnado | 8 | | 190 |
| Escuala Parroquial | 2 | | 135 |
| *Monterey:* | | | |
| Colegio de San José | 11 | | 350 |
| *Eagle Pass, Texas:* | | | |
| St. Joseph's Academy | 7 | | 85 |
| Our Lady of Guadalupe School | 3 | | 154 |
| *Saltillo:* | | | |
| Colegio La Purisima | 9 | 1 | 173 |
| Escuela San José | 2 | 2 | 185 |
| *Tampico:* | | | |
| Academy of the Incarnate Word | 14 | 4 | 525 |
| *Torreon:* | | | |
| Colegio Jesus Maria | 7 | 2 | 180 |
| Escuela San José | 2 | 1 | 180 |
| *Mexico City:* | | | |
| English Academy of the Incarnate Word | 12 | 2 | 250 |
| *Puebla:* | | | |
| Colegio del Verbo Encarnado | 7 | | 120 |

## HOSPITALS.

| San Antonio Province: | No. of Sisters | Nurses | Patients |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Texas—* | | | |
| *Boerne:* | | | |
| St. Mary's Sanitarium | 10 | | 63 |
| *Corpus Christi:* | | | |
| Spohn Sanitarium | 16 | 9 | 500 |
| *Marshall:* | | | |
| Texas Pacific Hospital | 7 | 4 | 2240 |
| *San Angelo:* | | | |
| St. John's Sanitarium | 12 | 14 | 452 |
| *San Antonio:* | | | |
| Santa Rosa Infirmary | 50 | 100 | 3791 |
| Santa Rosa Clinic | | | 6095 |

| | No. of Sisters | Nurses | Patients |
|---|---|---|---|
| ST. LOUIS PROVINCE: | | | |
| *Oklahoma—* | | | |
| *McAlester:* | | | |
| St. Mary's Infirmary | 9 | 6 | 350 |
| *Missouri—* | | | |
| *Sedalia:* | | | |
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| NEW ORLEANS VICE-PROVINCE: | | | |
| *Texas—* | | | |
| *Amarillo:* | | | |
| St. Anthony's Sanitarium | 15 | 16 | 789 |

OTHER INSTITUTIONS.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| SAN ANTONIO PROVINCE: | | | |
| *Texas—* | | | |
| *San Antonio:* | | | Inmates. |
| St. Joseph's Orphanage for Girls | 11 | | 92 |
| St. Peter's Orphanage for Boys | 11 | | 103 |
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| *Texas—* | | | |
| *Dallas:* | | | |
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